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THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

PUBLISHED BY
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The Theosophical Quarterly

Subscription price, $1.00 per annum; single copies 25 cents
Published by The Theosophical Society
at 64 Washington Mews, New York, N. Y.

July; October; January; April

Address all communications to P. O. Box 64, Station O, New York

In Europe, single copies may be obtained from and subscriptions may be sent to John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W. C. 2, England; or to Mr. E. H. Lincoln, 4 Sunningdale Avenue, Walker, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, from whom all back numbers may be obtained. Annual subscription price, 6s., postpaid.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The principal aim and object of this Society is to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The subsidiary objects are: The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

Entered as second-class matter September 5, 1923, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

APRIL, 1928

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Building on Recollection

WHILE the *Suttas* record instances in which the Buddha spoke eloquently to groups of villagers, to large numbers of men and women assembled in the towns, to those who visited him, as did King Ajatashatru and many learned Brahmans, yet it remains true that the heart of his teaching and its deepest elements were addressed, not to these varied listeners, but to disciples, or, sometimes, to a single disciple, as the beloved disciple Ananda. His main desire and purpose was to train disciples, to help those who desired liberation, and who were ready to work and sacrifice for liberation.

It was not enough for the aspirant for discipleship to wish for liberty, or even to express that wish to the great Master. He had to do much more: he had to sacrifice; and the initial sacrifice was drastic and inclusive: he who wished to be, in the true sense, a disciple of the Buddha, and a member of his Order, must first renounce all the normal desires and ambitions of ordinary personal life, and prove that his renunciation was real, by "giving up the household life and entering the homeless life"; he must repeat the sacramental formula, "I go for refuge to the Buddha, I go for refuge to the Law of Righteousness, I go for refuge to the Order"; and he must make the equivalent of the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and accept in detail a rule of life covering his studies, conduct and manners. Only after these great sacrifices and efforts were made, was it possible for him to be a disciple in the true sense, and to strive successfully for liberation. This necessity of initial sacrifice and effort is universal, perpetually valid; it may not be possible actually to leave home and all its duties and occupations, but it is necessary to make the act of self-surrender symbolized by this "going out", and to maintain and increase that self-surrender.

Therefore, those disciples to whom the essential teaching of the Buddha was

addressed, had already passed through the conversion of the will, the change of polarity, the transference of the centre of gravity, the self-identification, from the outer to the inner, from the lower to a higher self. Much, nay, almost everything remained to be done, but the first great sacrifice had been made, the first transformation had been passed through.

It is essential to keep this fundamental truth in mind when we seek to understand the central teaching of the Buddha: this teaching is addressed to those who have, in will and in act, sacrificed the personal to the spiritual life, and have thus established a focus of self-identification, of consciousness, in the spiritual life. It is especially necessary to keep this in mind while we are seeking to understand the vitally important teaching of Recollection, and what follows as the fruit of Recollection. The disciple, practising Recollection, must become aware of his actions, his sensations, his emotions. Precisely because, through sacrifice and the transfer of the focus of self-identification from the lower to the higher nature, he has raised his point of view from the midst of these acts, sensations and emotions, and has established a footing above them, so that he now looks down upon them from above, this very act of viewing them from above tends to separate him from them, to detach his will and consciousness from his sensations and emotions, and to free him from their domination. In other words, the very act of Recollection is, for the disciple, an instrument of liberation: the white light of spiritual perception is full of power, and, like the pressure of physical light described by Arrhenius, tends to drive outward and downward the enthralling sensations and emotions.

This is true for the regenerate disciple who, drawn by overmastering love of the Master and the beauty of holiness and valour in the Master, has made the initial effort and sacrifice, and has crossed the dividing line, saying, "To the Buddha as my refuge I go." But it is not true for the unregenerate man who, still clinging to the desires and activities of his personality, makes a certain effort towards the practice of Recollection. If, seeking the alert awareness which the Buddha has enjoined on his disciples, he dwells in thought upon his sensations, let us say the sensation of the flavour of alcohol, he is more likely to increase his desire and his slavery than to diminish or conquer it. So with anger or resentment; by becoming more aware of his feeling of injury suffered, he will strengthen it, because the focus of his consciousness, his self-identification, is still firmly rooted in the lower, personal self. The initial effort and sacrifice have not been made. The promised fruits of Recollection will not be gathered by him.

Therefore, *Light on the Path* bids the disciple, at the very beginning of the way, to "seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it." Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart. The great initial sacrifice must be made. Only after it has been made will the fruits of Recollection follow.

This is true of the ground previously covered regarding the practice of Recollection, up to the point where the disciple, having become fully aware of his acts, sensations and emotions, goes on to gain awareness of his thoughts,

immediately "realizing within himself the presence or absence of sensual thoughts, envious thoughts, thoughts of sloth and torpor, thoughts of vanity and vacillation, thoughts of doubt; conscious of their uprising, their rejection, and the danger of their return, even when they have been rejected." It is equally true of the teaching which follows.

The five forms of thought just enumerated are called the "five obscurities", or "obstacles", or "besetting sins", because they are the causal impulses in the mind, which impel and set in motion the ensnaring emotions and sensations. The Buddha then goes on to an equally fundamental part of his teaching, the five Skandhas, or aggregates, which are the basis and substance of personal life, and are therefore described as "the five aggregates of clinging to (personal) existence." Since the Skandhas are a fundamental element of the Buddha's method of instruction, it may be expedient to give the Sanskrit names, and try to gain a clear view of their meaning and content. First, Rûpa, "form", the "aggregate of form" being the physical body, whose constituent elements have already been enumerated and, in the "cemeteries", commented on with grim realism. As was pointed out at the time, the purpose of this stringent description is, to break down, at any cost, the enthralling tyranny of the body, which so dominates much of human life. After that tyranny has been broken, the right use of the body must be learned. Second, Vedanâ, "sensation", the "aggregate of sensations" being "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye", and the like enthralments of the other senses; as before, conquest of these tyrannies will lead to the right use of the powers of perception; but their abuse must first be blotted out. Third, Sanjñâ, which has been rendered "abstract ideas", "thoughts", and, in the enumeration of the Skandhas, appears to mean, not the direct impressions of the senses, but the thoughts abstracted, or extracted, from these impressions, as the thought of an allurement through the eyes, which is more abstract, and more lasting, than the allurement itself, and which contains the impelling force that leads one to seek the situation in which the allurement may be renewed. It is more mental than emotional, yet it contains the seeds of future emotions and craving for sensations. Fourth, Sanskârâ, "tendencies, both physical and mental". The history of this word is interesting. It seems to have meant first "adornment", and in particular, the adornment of pottery, the curves and dots and patterns which the potter incised on the unbaked clay of a jar which he had completed on his wheel, and which were rendered permanent by the process of firing in the kiln. The past participle of the same base, Sanskrita, "adorned", came to be applied to the "adorned", or "refined", language of the classical period, and is preserved in the word Sanskrit. As an element in the mind, Sanskârâ acquired a more special meaning. At first, it meant an imprint or pattern engraved on the psychic substance of the mind, as an inner copy of some outward object which the attention had rested on; the mind-image of something seen or heard or otherwise perceived. And, because this mind-image, if originally touched with desire, emotion or allurement, takes a certain life and energy of its own, and exerts pressure to bring about renewal of the alluring sensation, thus leading

to a reinforcement of the mind-image, and renewed repetition, the word gained the fuller meaning of "dynamic mind-image", which it has in the school of Shankara Acharya. This is close to the meaning in the teaching of the Buddha, who used the word to describe impressions which, by reason of their energy, become impulses or tendencies; and he included both mental and physical tendencies. Both are built up in the same way, by the embodiment of an "elemental" force in the impression, a force with impulses and claims of its own, and the tendency to express them. Fifth, Vijñâna, which means, in Sanskrit, knowing something as different from something else, a knowledge which distinguishes. As one of the Skandhas, its meaning is less abstract; it seems to indicate a tendency of the mind based on distinction or preference, and so a "predisposition, physical, mental or moral". To these five Skandhas, two more should probably be added: the "heresy of separateness" which marks the boundary of the personality, and "egotism" which supplies the driving power of the personal machine built up by the five more concrete Skandhas. With this technical description in mind, we may now consider what the Buddha is recorded as saying regarding the Skandhas:

"And further, disciples, with reference to the elements of being, a disciple abides considering the elements of being in the Five Aggregates of clinging to personal existence. How does the disciple so abide?

"In this world, disciples, a disciple attains to the understanding that 'this is Rûpa, the bodily form, this is the rising of form, and this its setting; this is Vedanâ, sensation, this is the rising of sensation, and this its setting; this is Sanjñâ, thought, this is the rising of thought, and this its setting; these are the Sanskârâ, the tendencies, this is the rising of the tendencies, and this their setting; this is Vijñâna, predisposition, this is the rising of predisposition, and this its setting'; thus recognizing the nature, the rising and the setting of each of these elements of being in the Five Aggregates of clinging to personal existence, his Recollection is established in the measure of this knowledge, in the measure of this detailed recollection."

To put it in other words: the disciple, who has made the indispensable initial sacrifice and effort of self-surrender, and has thereby established a focus of consciousness in the higher, spiritual nature, looks down from that point of vantage at the personality, analyzes it, takes it to pieces, and thus comes thoroughly to understand its nature and impulses, and, most vital, becomes thoroughly saturated with the realization that the personality is "not-self", that in it there is no selfhood or abiding principle. He does this not once, but continuously; establishing his realization by this detailed recollection until it is firmly fixed, and the domination of the personality is broken. Then will come the time for him to discover and acquire the right use of each of these powers, just as the time came to learn the right use of the bodily powers, after these had been analyzed and conquered. And as before, the white light of spiritual perception, in which the disciple views these powers, by its very nature aids him to subdue them. True Recollection is already the first step of conquest. So we come to the Six Dwellings; namely, the five organs of

perception, each being regarded as the dwelling of one of the powers of perception, sight, hearing and the other powers, together with mind, considered as the dwelling or receptacle in which the five kinds of perception are gathered together and moulded into general impressions or mind-images. The Buddha said:

"And further, disciples, with reference to the elements of being, a disciple abides considering the elements of being in the Six Dwellings, whether in himself or in another. How does the disciple so abide?

"In this world, disciples, a disciple understands the eye, understands forms, and understands the attachment which arises through these two, understanding how attachment not yet arisen may arise, how attachment which has arisen may be broken, how attachment which has been broken may arise in the future; so also he understands hearing and sounds and the attachment which arises through them, with its coming into being, its ceasing and the danger that it may arise again; so also with scent and odours; with the tongue and savours; so also with the body and contacts; so also with the mind and forms of thought and the attachment which may arise through these, its beginning, its ceasing and the danger that it may arise again. Thus he abides considering these elements of being, whether in himself or in another. He abides unswayed, coveting nothing in the world.

"And further, disciples, with reference to the elements of being, a disciple abides considering the elements of being in the Seven Members of Illumination. How does the disciple so abide?

"In this world, disciples, a disciple, if that member of illumination named Recollection is awake in his inner self, understands that it is awake; if it be not yet awake, he understands that it is not yet awake; so also with that member of illumination named Discernment of Elements; so also with that member of illumination named Valour; so also with that member of illumination named Joy; so also with that member of illumination named Serenity; so also with that member of illumination named concentrated Meditation; so also with that member of illumination named Poise. In the case of each, he understands how, if it be not yet awakened, it arises, and how, when it has arisen, it goes onward to perfect fulfilment."

The dividing line between the lower and the higher has been passed, the turning in the way has been conquered and the new way has been entered on; the disciple, having fought the good fight against the personal self and won the victory, thoroughly understanding the personal self and all its activities and allurements and delusions, now prepares to enter on that life which supersedes the personality; he is ready to gather the fruits of the spirit. And the fruits of the spirit are these: recollection, discernment, valour, joy, serenity, meditation, poise; this is the wisdom which comes down from above. The disciple is established on the path; his task is to attain these fruits, and to bring each one of them to perfection, assiduously guarding against the danger of recession.

In *Light on the Path* it is written that "he who would escape from the bondage of Karma must raise his individuality out of the shadow into the shine; must

so elevate his existence that these threads do not come in contact with soiling substances, do not become so attached as to be pulled awry. He simply lifts himself out of the region in which Karma operates. He does not leave the existence he is experiencing because of that. The ground may be rough and dirty, or full of rich flowers whose pollen stains, and of sweet substances that cling and become attachments—but overhead there is always the free sky. . . . The operation of the actual laws of Karma is not to be studied until the disciple has reached the point at which they no longer affect himself." This is an eloquent description of the stage of the path we have been considering; a summary of the allurements and the victory over them, whereby the disciple raises himself from the personality to the life which is above the personality, and receives his reward in an understanding of the laws of personal life, the laws of personal Karma. For there is also the greater Karma, the universal law of harmony guiding to perfection.

Therefore, it is precisely at this stage of the way that the Buddha gives his expression of the laws of personal Karma, by expanding and explaining the Four Noble Truths, whose deep metaphysical significance the disciple is now ready to understand, because he has conquered. The four noble truths are:

The misery of bondage to personal life;
The origin of this misery;
Its cessation;
The path that leads to this cessation.

Each of these noble truths is set forth with the Buddha's matchless gift for analysis and order, and also with something even greater, his profound understanding of human pain and sorrow that has won for him the name, Siddhartha the Compassionate; that kingly quality in him which inspired him to say, "Let all the sins of this evil age fall upon me, but let man be saved."

"What, disciples, is the noble truth of the misery of bondage? Birth is misery, decay is misery, sickness is misery, dying is misery, sorrow, lamentation, pain, despondency, despair are misery, longing for what we cannot get is misery, and in brief, the five aggregates of clinging are misery."

With compassion the Buddha describes the misery of birth in bondage to personality, the misery of decay, the misery of dying; with even deeper compassion he speaks of the misery of grief and lamentation, desponding and despair:

"What, disciples, is grief? When anyone, disciples, is overwhelmed by calamity, stricken by pain, so that he is afflicted by grief and grieving, the very essence of grief, the height of grief, the depth of grieving, this, disciples, is named grief.

"What, disciples, is lamentation? When anyone, disciples, is overwhelmed by calamity, stricken by pain, he laments with lamentation, with great and bitter lamentation, with the very essence of lamentation, grievous and bitter, this, disciples, is named lamentation.

"What, disciples, is bodily pain? When anyone, disciples, experiences bodily affliction and suffering, bodily torment and wounds, this, disciples, is named bodily pain.

"What, disciples, is desponding? When anyone, disciples, is afflicted by grief of heart, sorrow of heart, filling and overwhelming the mind, this, disciples, is named desponding.

"What, disciples, is despair? When anyone, disciples, is overwhelmed by calamity, stricken by the very essence of pain, and is filled with despair and despairing, with the full bitterness of despair and despairing, this, disciples, is named despair."

Even more noteworthy are the sentences that follow:

"What, disciples, is the misery of longing for what we cannot get? When any one among mortals longs to be free from the misery of birth, to escape from birth. But this is not to be gained by longing. When anyone longs to be free from decay, to escape from decay. But this is not to be gained by longing. When anyone longs to escape from dying. But this is not to be gained by longing. When anyone longs to escape from sickness and grief and lamentation and desponding and despair. But this is not to be gained by longing."

The Buddha then turns to the source, the cause, of this inescapable misery which surrounds and overwhelms the life of bondage to personality:

"What, disciples, is the noble truth of the origin of this misery? It is that thirsting desire which causes bondage to rebirth, thirsting desire full of sensuality and passion, seeking indulgence everywhere; it is the thirst of desire, the thirst for bodily life, the thirst for separate life. Whatever things are alluring and fascinating in this world, in these desire springs up and grows, in these desire establishes itself and takes root."

And once again he repeats to the disciples, now better able to comprehend, the long lists of sensual things which fascinate and allure, and of the powers through which they allure, dispensing "a several sin to every sense". Then follows the question:

"What, disciples, is the noble truth of the cessation of this misery? It is revulsion without any reserve, renunciation, abandonment, forsaking of thirsting desire; it is final liberation, free from allurement.

"And what, disciples, is the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation of misery? It is the Noble Eightfold Path, that is: Right Understanding, Right Resolution, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection, Right Meditation.

"And what, disciples, is Right Understanding? It is an understanding of the misery of bondage to personal life, an understanding of the origin of this misery, an understanding of its cessation, an understanding of the path that leads to this cessation.

"And what, disciples, is Right Resolution? It is the resolution of self-surrender, the resolution to be rid of malice, the resolution to refrain from injuring others.

"And what, disciples, is Right Speech? It is abstinence from lying, abstin-

ence from slander, abstinence from cruel words, abstinence from foolish and frivolous talk.

"And what, disciples, is Right Conduct? It is to abstain from killing, to abstain from taking what is not given, to abstain from unclean desires.

"And what, disciples, is Right Livelihood? It is when a noble hearer of the teaching, renouncing a wrongful livelihood, enters upon a right livelihood.

"And what, disciples, is Right Effort? It is when a disciple, with regard to evil and sinful elements of being which have not arisen, arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall not arise; when with regard to evil and sinful elements of being which have arisen, he arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall be extirpated; when with regard to righteous elements of being which have not arisen, he arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall arise; when with regard to righteous elements of being which have arisen, he arouses his will, determines, makes valorous effort, concentrates his imagination and resolves that they shall be established, that they shall not be shaken, that they shall be increased, that they shall be developed to full perfection.

"And what, disciples, is Right Recollection? It is when a disciple with reference to the body abides considering the body, ardent, fully conscious, recollected, altogether putting aside both covetousness and dejection, and so likewise with reference to sensations, to imaginings, to forms of thought.

"And what, disciples, is Right Meditation? It is when a disciple, cleansing himself from sensual desires, cleansing himself from sinful elements of being, enters into and abides in the first stage of Contemplation, which is accompanied by analysis and reasoning, born of discernment, suffused with happiness and joy; when, rising above analysis and reasoning, he enters into and abides in the second stage of Contemplation, a stilling of mental activity within himself, unified, without analysis or reasoning, suffused with happiness and joy; when, rising above rejoicing, he abides poised, recollected, fully conscious, aware of bodily serenity, he enters into and abides in the third stage of Contemplation; when he transcends both rejoicing and grieving, when both exulting and desponding have ceased, he enters into and abides in the fourth stage of Contemplation, beyond rejoicing or grieving, poised, recollected, pure. This, disciples, is Right Meditation. This is the noble truth of the cessation of the misery of bondage."

So far the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the consummation of the Four Noble Truths. For how long, through how many lives, must the devoted disciple tread the path before he attains to liberation? The answer of the Buddha to this inevitable question is, perhaps, the most striking part of the whole teaching:

"Whoever, disciples, thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during seven years, may confidently look for one of two rewards: even in his present state he will attain to illumination, or, if there be in him a

remainder of the aggregates, he will not again fall into bondage. But, disciples, it is not a question of seven years; whoever thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during six years, may confidently look for one of these rewards. Nor, disciples, is it a question of six years; whoever thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during five years, may confidently look for one of these rewards. Nor, disciples, is it a question of five, or four, or three, or two years, or even of one year, of seven, or six, or five, or four, or three, or two months, or one month, or even of a half-month; whoever thus goes forward through these four degrees of Recollection during seven days, may confidently look for one of these two rewards: even in his present state he will attain to illumination, or, if there be in him a remainder of the aggregates, he will not again fall into bondage.

"This was my meaning when I said in the beginning that there is one way of salvation for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of grieving and lamentation, for the conquest of misery and dejection, for the increase of wisdom, for the attainment of Nirvana, namely, the establishment of these four degrees of Recollection."

Thus spoke the Master. Rejoicing, the disciples praised the Master's word.

Stewardship not only embraces money, but time, talents, influences and life. Money is the easiest thing to give. The question about money is not how much of my money shall I give to the Lord, but how much of the Lord's money, temporarily in my possession, should I keep for myself? I am the custodian, not the owner. Likewise as a steward of time or talents or life, how much should I use in pleasure or recreation, or business, or self-seeking? It is all His.—ANON.

FRAGMENTS

THE Eternal Truth speaketh:—

If thou canst not fly, then run; if thou canst not run, then walk; if thou canst not walk, then crawl. Be not so much concerned with the dignity of thy progression, as that progression be accomplished. Surely it were better to crawl into the Kingdom of Heaven than never to enter there at all.

To make a fine appearance in thine own eyes will serve thee little with the angels, whose clear vision pierces to the essence; and a strut will carry thee crab-wise whither thou wouldst not go.

If thou be a worm, then humbly crawl; mayhap thy Lord will lend thee later iridescent wings, when thy novitiate fulfils thy transformation.

Thou must give Me all because I am all. Whatever thou canst find in any created thing is but symbol of that which I must be to thee, and which therefore thou canst have in fulness and perfection.

Never is it a giving up, but always an increase of gift and of possession, until there be no limit; since that which is limitless will be contained in thee—thy consciousness expanded to the All.

So act that all thy actions may return to Me; so think that in Me at last all thy thoughts may find their home.

Yet for this their nature must be similar to Mine: that which is unlike I cannot have. Impress this duty firmly upon thy mind; make it as an offering of love throughout thy day.

Darkness, thou sayest; what of that? Sorrow, thou sayest, and pain; again what of that? Why fix thy gaze upon the ephemeral instead of on the Real? Look at the Radiance beyond.

Not here is peace, but tribulation;

Not here is rest, but toil;

Not here is any satisfaction, but Dead Sea fruit.

Yet here is opportunity, and work, and need—*My need:* and therefore here is thy joy—for Me, and in Me alone.

CAVÉ.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

IT is the purpose of this article to consider certain practical aspects of our consciousness and of the instruments through which it acts, in the hope that we may thereby gain a clearer understanding of what is involved in aspiration to chêlaship and the inner life. We shall try to see what it is that now limits our personal consciousness, and how those limitations may be overcome; and by examining the way in which our physical organism serves our will, we shall seek to learn how we ourselves may serve a Will higher than our own.

Let us begin with the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine:* the unity of Being, above and within the duality of manifestation, and the omnipresence of both consciousness and matter, as two facets or aspects of that Unity.

To the unity of the physical universe, our modern science bears abundant testimony. A change in any part affects every other part. I move my hand, and, obedient to the law of gravitation, that movement is registered in an altered pull upon each and every particle of matter—to the farthest stars. Its effect diminishes with "the square of the distance"; but nowhere is it zero. Again, the contrast and play of light and shade, which make up the visible scene we now look upon, are radiating out into space with enormous, but calculable, velocity, in an ever growing sphere. A thousand years from now it will still be there, a *present* scene, for a sufficiently sensitive and sufficiently distant eye,—as the light, which now reaches us from the fixed stars, started on its journey to us years, or centuries, ago. Space and time, in separating, also connect; and all things, near and far, past, present and future, are interrelated in mutual action and reaction, knitting diversity into unity.

The modern thought of the West—which thus both parallels and illumines, with concrete illustrations, the doctrine of the unity of the universe in its physical aspect—has paid far less heed to its equally omnipresent aspect of consciousness, and has, indeed, scarcely made a beginning in investigating its characteristics and laws. When, therefore, we attempt to follow Theosophy into the realm of consciousness, and there to do for ourselves what science has done for us in the realm of matter, we no longer feel upon such familiar ground, and have not the aid of ready-made illustrations and of examples that have become classic through use, so that a mere reference is sufficient to bring their significance to mind. Though we do no more than draw, from the same fundamental principles, the same logical consequences that physical science has verified in their application to matter, and though our conclusions, as

applied to consciousness, are not dissimilar to the speculations of Bergson and certain other philosophers, they have not yet, in that application, the support of general recognition and acceptance; and for this reason it may be best for us to formulate them here merely as tentative—asking no more of the reader than that they be considered as hypotheses to be examined and tested by the results that they yield.

Let us assume then, in accordance with this first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, that, in the ultimate analysis, "Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter are, however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two facets or aspects of the Absolute (Parabrahm), which constitute the basis of conditioned Being, whether subjective or objective"; and that, therefore, they are equally omnipresent throughout the manifested universe; that wherever matter is, there also is consciousness; that whatever affects matter, is registered also in consciousness; and, conversely, that whatever affects consciousness, is also registered in matter. From this it follows immediately, as the necessary and logical conclusion, that as matter is infinitely diversified, yet interconnected and interrelated in all its parts by mutual action and reaction, so also consciousness, infinitely diversified, must still be knit into a single whole, in which each part shares in whatever affects any other part. Each reflects the whole, and to that whole makes its own special contribution. In short, it follows that everything that is, is conscious and universally conscious—sharing in the consciousness, to some measure and degree, of everything else that is, and of the Whole of which it is a part.

It is clear that this leads to a very different view of consciousness and of the world about us than that which is ordinarily assumed; and that it involves a radical readjustment of our naïve and egotistic assumptions, which it may not be easy for us to make, and which, indeed, appears at first to present serious difficulties. We can no longer, for example, think of anything as inanimate and unconscious. Everything, sticks and stones, the earth under our feet and the air about us, the paper on which we write and the pencil which we use, must have a consciousness of its own,—which in some measure shares in ours, and in which we in some measure share. The metaphysical problem of consciousness is completely reversed. It is no longer concerned to explain how consciousness arises; for it is here seen not as arising but as ever present, not as secondary but as primary, being, with matter, a facet of the primordial "Beness" from which all else arises. The problem is not, therefore, to account for its presence in living organisms, but to explain its limitations there; to understand how and why consciousness, which in theory should be infinite and universal, is in ourselves so partial and restricted. Any assertion that our own consciousness is all-embracing and "cosmic," is met with the common-sense retort that, if so, we are unconscious of it; and we have to face the rather puzzling questions as to how consciousness can be unconscious, whether such a notion is anything more than a flat contradiction in terms, and whether it does not reduce the whole theory to meaningless nonsense.

On examination, however, these difficulties are found not to be as formid-

able as they at first seem, and the theory itself (or something very like it) is one to which, quite independently of Theosophy, a number of thinkers have been led as the only one which squares with the observed and inescapable facts. Among them, as we have said, is Bergson; and his book, *Matter and Memory*, is largely devoted to its exposition, and to resolving in detail the difficulties it presents. We must content ourselves here with more summary answers to our questions, merely indicating the directions in which their verification may be found.

That which limits our consciousness is the narrowness of our interests. We are primarily interested in action—for the most part of very restricted, though by no means always physical, kinds—and, in our absorption in our primary interests, we push into the background and ignore everything which does not immediately concern them. In other words, we disregard everything upon which we do not propose to act, and confine ourselves to what we think we can use in furtherance of our present purpose. We shall not, however, be able to accept this statement, indeed it is turned into nonsense, unless we recognize that there are inner as well as outer acts, and that our desires are concerned with both. Biologists are in the habit of asserting that the primary desires and actions are directed to self-preservation, to the obtaining of food, shelter, etc. This is as true of our emotions as of our body. When resentment, for example, is uppermost in us, it seeks food on which to feed; and if it be attacked, it shelters itself under any subterfuge. These are as direct "actions" as any which the body performs, and usually they are of far more potent and lasting effect. With this understanding of what we mean by "action," the truth of the theory becomes self-evident, and we proceed to note that, as "desire precedes function, and function precedes organism," the mind has been formed as an organ to guide us in such actions as affect our habitual desires. In the exercise of this function, there are drawn into the mind those elements of our consciousness which are pertinent and useful, and these are illumined by the desires they are evoked to serve. As the stronger and more concentrated is the light, the darker is the shadow that it casts, the rest of consciousness sinks into deeper obscurity, and our recognition of our own consciousness becomes thus limited to that upon which the spot-light of desire falls—to the momentary content of the narrow circle of our mind. We make the mistake of identifying ourself with our mind—the self with an organ of the self; and since the efficiency of the mind is measured no less by its rejection of all that is irrelevant to its decisions, than by its assembling of all that is pertinent, *mental* consciousness can, and should, never be more than partial.

This principle, thus briefly sketched, is of fundamental importance to the understanding—and consequently to the development and enrichment—of the type of *personal* consciousness which is all that we generally recognize as ours. We must cease to think of the mind as the cause, or origin, or seat, of consciousness, and see it, instead, as an organ which, in the service of desire, focuses consciousness upon the choice of action open to us, and thereby *limits*

it to what is relevant to that choice. In the view to which Theosophy leads us, we have to regard the consciousness of any thing as an ever present and inseparable facet or aspect of its action and reaction upon the universe of which it is a part; and since, because of the unity of Being, this action and reaction are ceaseless and unlimited, extending throughout the infinite Whole, so also must be the consciousness that is inseparable from them. Yet that which distinguishes us as *persons*,—that which is characteristic of what we call living, sentient beings—is, that in us there is a certain freedom of choice, a measure of *free will*, which enables us to choose the nature of the response or reaction we shall make to the influences we experience. There is a zone wherein we may accept or reject, co-operate or resist, obey or disobey,—where, as persons, there is open to us the possibility of spontaneous action, unnecessitated and unpredictable. Within that zone therefore, our actions and reactions are of a different order from the actions and reactions of "inanimate" things; and it is this difference (either of order or of range within which it operates) that differentiates our *personal* consciousness from the consciousness which we share with the "lower" kingdoms—with earth and air and fire and water, with rocks and trees and flowers, with birds and beasts. The *personal* consciousness is characterized by choice, by preference, by desire, and is limited as these are limited, confined to the zone in which they operate. It is not the whole of consciousness; it is a form of consciousness, which in us is so brightly lit that all else is cast into shadow.

When the light is lessened, when we are no longer dazzled by the glittering lustre of our own desires, then the shadows thin and vanish, enabling us to see what lay within them. Our conscious consciousness, the consciousness we recognize as ours, expands,—until nothing of Being seems foreign to it. With St. Francis we begin to hear the music of the Canticle of the Creatures: "Most high, almighty and good Lord, thine be the praise and glory, the honour and every blessing. . . . Praise to Thee, Lord, with all thy creatures. . . . to Brother Sun, who makes the day that lightens us. Fair he is, and shineth with a great splendour. Most High, he bears the mark of Thee. . . . Praise to Thee, Lord, for Sister Water. Very useful is she, and humble and precious and chaste. . . ."

As we reflect upon this, we may be reminded of that marvellous allegory of the Garden of Eden and the fall of Man, which is so generally and grossly misinterpreted, but which we may now see in a wholly different light. Before the "knowledge of good and evil," while all about him, "good" to God, was also good to Man, Man accepted all things—as the rock to-day accepts them. He was "obedient" as the rock is obedient, rejecting nothing, and therefore sharing in the consciousness of all,—as, it may be, the rock still shares. But when desire had been born in him, and he had eaten of the forbidden fruit of the distinction between (what was to him) "good and evil," he fell from the freedom of universality into the bondage of personal preference and finitude. He was shut out from the other fruits of the garden and driven into the wilderness—the lawlessness—of his own desires, there to die, as desire dies, to be

reborn again. As the serpent promised him, it gave him something godlike, something of God's spontaneity and freedom of action, the power of impressing himself upon all he touches, imparting his own likeness to all his works; but it laid upon him, also, something of God's task—the task of a creation whose results should be found "good"—the task of exercising his divine powers and by exercise causing them to grow, till his knowledge of good and evil should be attuned to God's knowledge, and his own desire should lead him back to the obedience from which he had turned. Not until then can his personal consciousness be a universal consciousness; but then, throughout its whole infinite extent, it will be flooded with the light of desire made divine, and of an obedience that is free willed.

We must return, however, to our immediate concern, which is to assure ourselves that we see clearly how our personal consciousness is directed toward action, and how it is limited by the limitations of our desires and interests.

Examples abound on every hand. As visitors, we enter a machine shop. We are nearly deafened by the noise. We are acutely conscious of it because we dislike it, and want to do something to escape it. In the midst of it, we can scarcely hear ourselves think, let alone hearing our companion speak. But the machinists who are working there are largely unconscious of the general din, which deafens us. They are used to it, and do not contemplate doing anything whatever about it. Each is attending to his own machine, and that general noise in no way prevents his being immediately conscious of any change in the sound of the particular moving rods and wheels for whose action he is personally responsible. An altered note, that we do not hear at all, is the signal that oil is needed. He is alert for that signal, intent to act upon it, and therefore is conscious of it when it comes. Were there a gramophone there, it would record "mechanically" all the sounds which reached it (to which it was capable of responding—even with it there is *some* selection). It would not pick and choose according to personal interest.

Again: we open our morning mail. There is an advertisement of a new restaurant (not in our part of town); of a "superlatively elite" laundry; of a sale of women's shoes. Some one wants to sell us some mining stock; some one else—of whom we have never heard—makes free use of our name, and knows us so well that he (or she) is sure that we can have no better use for our money than to send a contribution to his special charity. Our desires disown these, one and all. We have no intention of acting upon them, and they are dropped into the waste-basket and out of our consciousness at one and the same time. There are three or four letters which concern not only us but others. There is nothing we can do about them until we have consulted our associates. They are put aside—on our desk and in consciousness. There remain some half dozen that we have to answer, to act upon, and we take them up one by one. But if they be unrelated, it is only the one upon which we are at the moment working, of which we are mentally conscious. Our mental consciousness of it, however, not only excludes what is unrelated to it, but evokes (both from memory and imagination) whatever is pertinent to the decision to be

made and the action to be taken. That is, our mind does both of these things provided it is working efficiently; and the measure of its efficiency is the rapidity, ease and completeness, with which it does them, and the justness of the ranking and order of precedence which it ascribes to the various elements in relation to the end to be sought. If irrelevancies intrude, if the mind wander, if serviceable factors be overlooked and important correlates forgotten, if the trivial be given equal weight with the vital, or judgments be made from the mood of the moment instead of in relation to our more permanent will,—then it is obvious that the mind is not fulfilling its function and is not working properly. But let us note that though the mind must focus consciousness upon the present action, to the exclusion of all else, it must not become so absorbed therein as not to be ceaselessly alert to opportunities of action of a different kind, and ready instantly to alter the focus, should any other action appear more timely or important. If, for example, while we are writing one of our personal letters, a friend should come in who is concerned in the letters we have put aside, the mind must be alert to the opportunity thus offered to consult him about it. The whole previous content of the mind must be swept away, and a new content instantly assembled. This is a feat of no mean difficulty—as those will testify who have to work under recurring interruptions —and it involves a greater drain upon mental and nervous energy than do hours of consecutive thought directed to a single end. It is as though consciousness, like matter, possessed mass, and the properties of mass which we know as inertia and momentum.

Let us turn now to certain significant features of the organism through which our conscious actions and reactions are made. The more elementary the organism—that is, the further back we go in the evolutionary stream—the more predictable, and the less spontaneous, do its actions appear. The organism itself is less differentiated. All portions of the protoplasmic mass seem equally sensitive and equally competent to perform any of the functions of which the whole is capable. There are primitive forms of marine life (resembling the jelly fish) which have no stomach, but digest with the whole or any part of themselves, simply wrapping themselves around anything they touch and absorbing what they can. On the other hand, when any one of the little prolongations of itself, which the amœba puts forth, comes into contact with a foreign substance it is immediately withdrawn. It is a predictable, reflex action, or reaction, of which many examples may still be found in the human body, such as occurs when there is a direct connection between the nerves that receive the external stimulus and those which control the muscular response. Sensitiveness and movement, perception and reaction to what is perceived, are here very plainly two indivisible aspects of a single property. But as we advance in the scale of evolution, the organism grows more complex. "There is a division of labour; functions become differentiated, and the anatomical elements thus determined forego their independence." In particular, there is a separation between the sensory and motor functions of the nerves,—between those which receive an external

influence, and those which set in motion and sustain the organism's reaction to it; between *perception* and the *action* to be taken regarding the thing perceived. "In such an organism as our own, the nerve fibres termed sensory are exclusively empowered to transmit stimulation to a central region [the brain] whence the vibration will be passed on to motor elements. It would seem that they have abandoned individual action to take their share as outposts in the manœuvres of the whole body" (*Matter and Memory*, p. 56).

In relation to the physical organism, therefore, the brain (and to a lesser extent other nervous centres of the body) acts as a central switchboard, or turn-table, to which all incoming wires or tracks are led, and from which radiate all those that go out. Here any external influence, coming in on any track or wire, meets the focussed consciousness of the mind, and is by it switched over onto any outgoing track or wire; so that the action of the universe upon us is reflected back, as our action upon it, through any one of the reactions of which the organism is capable. *Perceptions* are thereby turned into *actions*, whose character is determined, within the range of the instrument, by the choice of the operator.

This function of the nerves and brain, and the fact that if they are damaged the activity of consciousness is impaired, have led to their being often regarded as the origin and seat of consciousness. This is not correct. If a nerve be severed or paralyzed, it is as though a telephone wire were cut. Consciousness exists at either end, but communication of a certain kind is interrupted; the words that are spoken are not heard, and the directions they were intended to convey are not carried out. If the brain itself is deranged, or dominated by fixed ideas, it is as though the switch-board were damaged or clogged. Some connections cannot be made, and others stick and jam so that they cannot be broken. The signal to the operator does not work; we get "the wrong number," or are put upon a "busy" or noisy wire, where messages are confused by intrusive fragments of foreign and irrelevant conversation. But though all this may limit consciousness, by limiting its interaction with other consciousness, it does not destroy it; nor, conversely, can the instruments which it uses, create it. The rivers cut their channels to the sea, and if the channel is blocked, the flow is dammed, until another outlet be found or created; but the dry bed of the stream cannot create the water to fill it.

It will be profitable to look more closely at this machinery of perception and of action, through which our personal consciousness receives, and responds to, the influences of its environment. We note, first, that, like all machines—all specialized organs—it has been developed to serve a specific purpose, and to perform, as perfectly and economically as possible, a special function, which, prior to the development of the machine, was a labour shared by all elements in the body and was performed, as it were, by hand. The process is well illustrated in the social body. A generation ago, every household baked its own bread. To-day, in the cities, it is largely obtained from bakeries, where machinery is used that has been developed for this one purpose. So, too, with spinning and weaving, the lighting of the home, and innumerable other tasks,

which, in a pioneer civilization, must be done by each separate household, but which are later taken over by specialists, machinery being developed to supply the wants of the whole community. It is the same with our specialized senses and nervous system. They have been designed and built up to meet definite needs in the furtherance of our relatively fixed and permanent desires. They do not report *all* facts, respond to all influences indiscriminately; on the contrary, they strain and sift these, rejecting whatever is not useful to the desires they serve. Therefore our sense perceptions are never "pure" and whole, but, being made as a selection with reference to our desires, are coloured by them. They do not give us the raw stuff of reality, the "run of mine" of Being, but rather the iron or tin or gold, whichever they may be designed to extract, separated out from the crude ore. It is this which they present to our mental consciousness; and, as we have already seen, the mind carries this selective and colouring process still further, focussing upon the sense perceptions and mixing with them those elements of our past experience that are pertinent to our present desires. We perceive reality only through the veil of desire, and in accordance with the use that we purpose to make of it.

The second point that we are concerned to note is the logical corollary of the first. If our desires undergo a radical change, the machinery which formerly served us may become a positive hindrance. What was to our old desires a mere "waste product," may now be what we most want. Our sense perceptions have been trained to reject this, and we are without any specialized organs by which to detect and secure it. It can be found only in the "invisible," in the "silence," in the moveless and unchanging, because our senses have not been designed to "see" and "hear" it, or to respond to its motion. We have now, therefore, in pursuance of these new desires, to begin by doing *with the whole of ourselves* what formerly, in relation to our old desires, our special organs did for us; but as we do this—which can at first be little more than a blind groping—we gradually develop the faculties which enable us to do it better and more easily. We build new machinery, new senses, to serve these new desires, just as our old organs were built to serve our old desires; or, more accurately, we discover that we can modify and rebuild our old machines, reversing their action, so that they reject what they formerly retained, and retain what they formerly rejected. We learn to "see" and to "hear," to act and to react, through sensory and motor "nerves" attuned to a different sensitiveness.

It remains to examine more carefully the three-fold relation that exists between (*a*) the complexity of the organism, (*b*) its capacity for spontaneous action (that is, for a response to external influences which is not necessitated or determined either by those influences or by the organism's own nature), and (*c*) its utility and efficiency as an *instrument* of the indwelling consciousness and will. An *instrument* of our will must be something which our will itself directs, and whose action is determined by us, and neither by itself nor by that to which it is directed. Therefore, if it be a living instrument, it must, first, be capable of spontaneous action; and, second, it must have surrendered

that spontaneity to us. It must be capable of resisting external influences, and of acting upon them in unnecessitated and unpredictable ways, according to its own free choice; and then, instead of making that choice itself, it must refer it to us, and act upon our decision as though it were its own. It is not an instrument unless it fulfils each of these two pre-requisites; and each of them is dependent upon *sacrifice*.

That the surrender of one's own choice involves sacrifice is obvious; though it is equally obvious that more may be gained from it than is lost. It is not so clear that spontaneity itself is dependent upon it, and to see this we have to look a little beneath the surface. We recognize at once that spontaneity implies the possibility of opposite, or at least different, reactions to the same stimulus; and we see that this necessitates some degree of complexity in the organism, such as the coexistence or union of two opposing tendencies between which choice may be made. This is a necessary condition, but it is not a sufficient one. For if the union be only mechanical, the two opposite tendencies would strike a mechanical balance; nullifying one another with resulting paralysis, if equally strong; or the weaker acting as a drag upon the more powerful, robbing it of the greater part of its effect. If the two were nearly equal, so that at one time one predominated, and at another time the other, there would be a delusive appearance of spontaneity; but it would not be real, and it would have been gained only at the cost of efficiency. It would be simply the mechanical resultant of the opposing forces, mathematically predictable the moment the forces were uncovered. That is not the way in which our physical organism works. To extend my hand I do not have to overcome a muscular tendency to withdraw it; and the reason that this is so is that the union, in my body, of elementary organisms of opposing tendencies, is not merely mechanical, but is one to which each of these organisms brings the willingness and the ability to *sacrifice* itself,—to surrender, and itself to hold in check, the operation of its own native reaction, in favour of whatever other reaction may be selected by the central authority to which all report and from which all take their orders. Indeed, the sacrifice and self-surrender go further than this. Not only does each element hold itself in check, so as not to hamper the action of its opposite, but it lends its own strength to re-enforce that action, so that the whole force of the body can be poured into any chosen response. It is sacrifice, and sacrifice alone, that gives true spontaneity. "The gods are nourished by sacrifice." The roots of freedom are in self-surrender.

We are now in a position to approach the practical, personal questions—the central, inescapable problems of the religious life—which press with special poignancy upon all aspirants for chêlaship. How are we to become conscious, *personally* conscious, in the inner world, as we now are in the outer? How are we to learn to "see" and to "hear" there, to "speak" and "stand" in the presence of the Masters? How are we to free our sense of identity from the body and the mind, the hopes and fears and emotions and desires, which now hold it, and transfer it to the soul? We read again the words of *Light on the*

Path: "Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful complex, separated life exists, then, indeed, and then only, he is upon the way." How are we to do this? How make of our "wonderful complex, separated life" an instrument for something greater than our individuality? How are we, who aspire to serve the great Lodge of Masters, to make ourselves its chêlas, to enter into its body as an organ—however limited and elementary—for its use? It was to gain such light as we could upon these questions, that we have undertaken this inquiry into the nature of personal consciousness and of the organism and senses through which it acts. Let us try now to see its bearing, and the answers it suggests.

We go back to the beginning of our inquiry. As consciousness is universal, an inseparable aspect of the action and reaction existing through the whole of Being, some measure of consciousness of the inner world, of the Divine Will, and of the Lodge that serves it, must already be ours. It well may be that we did not need to be assured of this. These questions could scarcely be ours had we not recognized some aspect of that consciousness. Yet it is of value to note that our first step is not to gain something which we have not; it is to recognize something which we have, but have ignored. One clear inference from this is that we must seek for the expansion of this recognition, not in the unusual, for we do not ignore the unusual, but in something so constantly with us, so inborn and native, that we have ceased to heed it; taking it for granted as we do the air we breathe, without its ever occurring to us that this same air may be made the means to lift us above the earth. Another inference is that any psychic approach is highly unlikely to be successful, for it, *par excellence*, stresses the bizarre and exceptional, and the universal escapes it entirely, being covered by the trite.

To learn to recognize something which we have: how do we learn to recognize? How does the botanist learn to recognize plants? He observes and collects, and compares what he collects with standard types and specimens. We may do the same; for we have available the records which our elder brothers have left us of their own experience, their first hand knowledge of the inner life. We may read these records. It matters very little, if at all, which we select: *Light on the Path*, *Through the Gates of Gold*, the *Bhagavad Gîta*, the Bible, *The Imitation of Christ*, the *Life of St. Teresa*, or Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Any *real* book will do. As we read, we shall be steeping ourselves in the atmosphere of the other world, and we shall be able to recognize, more and more clearly, both its "otherness," its difference from our ordinary personal consciousness, and its nativeness to that which is deepest in us,—to a Self that is beyond self, a Self which we never are, but which is more real, and more really ourself, than all we are.

Spiritual reading is thus the first practice which our inquiry suggests.

We recall next how consciousness is limited by our interests. So long as our personal interests are centred in the outer world and limited to it, so long must our personal consciousness be similarly confined. To become conscious of the inner life we must *desire* it. Desire must be the driving force. Without it we can do nothing. Over and over again we have been urged to desire greatly; to cease to seek such little aims. A little comfort, a little work, a little praise or fame, a little love, a few more years of life on earth: what are these to the soul of man? Against them we hear the voice of the Master: "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." There may have been times when we thought these were hard sayings—as though a "jealous god" wished to rob us of all that made life dear; but they are not arbitrary dicta; they are laws inherent in the very nature of the personal consciousness. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"; for our consciousness is ruled and focussed by desire.

We have, therefore, to do everything we can to turn our desires to the inner world, and to strengthen their hold upon it. Most of us have had some experience in changing the current of our likes and dislikes, and we know from this that the flow of desire in any given direction can be increased by attention and by sacrifice. We can use these here.

Desires are, however, of many kinds, and our analysis of personal consciousness showed that the desires which focussed it are those which are themselves focussed upon action. The principle, involved in this, is of far-reaching importance. The inner world will not open and yield its secrets to the merely curious, to the dilettante, to the seeker of sensation or the sentimentalist. These must be content with its psychic counterfeit, for they can penetrate no further. Nor is the desire to *know*, the abstract search for truth, pure and high though it may be, sufficient. We must desire to know *in order to act;* seek the Divine Will in order to obey it. Only when he resolved to be as one of the "hired servants" of his father, did the prodigal son find his way home. It is true that the theory of consciousness permits us to become aware of what we oppose, as well as of what we strive to further, so that theoretically it is possible to enter the inner world as either friend or foe, courting ultimate annihilation or eternal life (and that this possibility is more than theoretical, the existence of the Black Lodge proves); but what is *not* possible is to gain entrance there as neutrals or as drones.

We shall do well to remind ourselves, therefore, over and over again, that as "desire precedes function" (action), so "function (action) precedes organism." It is by *doing* that we build up the organism which enables us to do better; and our faculties of perception, our senses, are, as we have seen, but

part of the organism of action. They receive and select those elements of the action of the universe upon us, to which we react—which we reflect back upon the universe as our action upon it—and this reception and selection is an inseparable part of the action and reaction, and not something that can exist alone. Notice the position which the whole body takes when we try to quicken any sense to its keenest activity, when we look or listen as intently as possible. Instinctively we assume a poise alert for instant action of any kind—even though our reason may tell us that no immediate action will be required by what we see or hear. This, which the body does automatically in aid of our outer senses, we must do intentionally in aid of our inner senses. We must act upon what we know, and we must be alert and poised to act upon what we seek to know.

There may be need here for a word of warning, and for a reminder of what was said earlier of "action" being a broader word than many seem to think it; since there are inner as well as outer acts. Love, worship, adoration, praise and thanksgiving, the humbling of self and the exaltation of others, faith and trust and hope, are far more potent "acts" than the banging of our fist upon the table, the strident insistence upon our own way, and the "busy-body" intrusion into the concerns of our neighbours. Silence may be action of the most direct kind, and may demand and wield a greater power than does speech. Rest, the rest of utter self-giving—not of mere relaxation—is also an act.

From all of this, we draw another clear rule for our guidance. We must consecrate ourselves to action, and consecrate all our actions to the end that our desires seek. Body, mind and heart, all we are or have, must be enlisted and must be used.

Our review brings us now to the characteristic features of our nervous organism, which make it (and the whole body) an *instrument* for our use. Here the lessons are very clear, direct and concrete. If, in the words of *Light on the Path*, we are "to reach to the life beyond individuality" by recognizing and using that "whole individuality" as our instrument, we must so organize it that it can serve that end. The body offers us a working model, and detail by detail we must copy that model until every part of our nature is brought into accordance with it.

Let us see what this involves in relation to our personal consciousness, the consciousness which our physical nervous system serves, and which must now itself be made an instrument of something greater. For this, we have seen that there are two prerequisites: first, our personalities must be made capable of genuinely spontaneous action; and, second, we must surrender that spontaneity —our own freedom of choice—to our Master. If we recall what we observed of the difference between a mere mechanical union of opposing tendencies—giving a spurious appearance of spontaneity—and the organization and true spontaneity which resulted when that union was perfected through self-surrender and sacrifice, it will become startlingly clear, on the least self-examination, that in our personal nature (as distinct from our body) the union is as yet only of the former, the mechanical kind. Our desires, thoughts, feelings

and emotions are under no central control, nor do they manifest even the rudiments of self-surrender and sacrifice. They act, and war, one against the other. At one hour, one is uppermost; and at the next, another; and our actions, our reactions to external influences, instead of being freely chosen, are the automatic, predictable and purely reflex reactions necessitated by the tendency which is uppermost. Something "*makes*" us lose our temper; we do not deliberately choose anger as our response. We fly because fear dominates us, and fear *must* fly; or we press forward, because, for the moment, we are more curious than afraid, yet we feel the drag of fear and advance hesitatingly. Whatever we do, we do against opposition from within ourselves. We are for ever of "doubtful mind," weak, vacillating, ineffective; because the elemental tendencies, which make up our personal nature, have not been trained in sacrifice and self-surrender so as to be willing and able to hold themselves in check in favour of their opposites; and because, an even deeper lack, there is no permanent centre to which everything is referred and which is alone empowered to decide and initiate our actions.

This is what we must alter. We must so control and reorganize our personality as to become capable of genuinely spontaneous, freely chosen action. The "awakened spiritual will"—the will which animates us in this whole undertaking, and which we recognize as that of our true self—must be given that same position of central authority, over all elements in our personality, that our mental consciousness occupies in relation to the physical nervous system. This is both the beginning and the end. It must first be given, then it must be enforced and confirmed; until finally it becomes habitual, as "function" builds up "organism." Such a transformation cannot be accomplished all at once. It must be the result of an effort that is persistent and unremitting. We must remember always what we are trying to do, and *everything* must be referred to this "central authority," to be seen and judged, not from the personal standpoint, but in relation to our true self. This is what religious treatises mean by the practice of Recollection. It is, on a different plane, the same practice, the same "function" or action, which, through ages of evolution, resulted in leading our physical nerves to their centre in the brain.

For this practice to be successful, however, it is clear that we must work also from the other end, breaking up that direct connection between "sensory" and "motor" functions, the receipt of an influence and the response to it, which causes purely reflex action, and which now makes us act automatically on whatever emotion happens to be uppermost and is externally stimulated. Our emotions must be trained to hold their motor functions in check. This in no way diminishes their sensitiveness. On the contrary it increases it. They become keener than before, more sharply aware of all that press upon them; for they have surrendered to the "central authority" all weapons of offence and defence, and act only in their "sensory" capacity, merely reporting what they feel, without themselves opposing or inviting it. Little by little, however, as they do this, their sensitiveness undergoes a change, so that instead of being sensitive only for self and in relation to self, the range widens,

as well as deepens, and they become sensitive for all that concerns the authority to which they report. This is part of what is called the practice of Detachment. It is intimately related to the whole first half of *Light on the Path*. It is not to be confined merely to the emotions; it applies to all elements in the nature. To turn to the centre, we must turn away from the circumference. To buy the "pearl of great price," we must sell all that we have.

These two practices of Recollection and Detachment not only tend to give our true self the control of our personality, and to make it capable of spontaneous action and of use as an instrument; they also have a very direct and marked effect upon the character and range of our perceptions. In our analysis of perception we saw that it was never "pure" or whole, but always coloured and limited by the desires it served. As these desires change, our perceptions change; and when they are replaced by the "awakened spiritual will," the change is radical. The senses, detached from outer things, begin to open on inner things, becoming sensitive to the interests of the will they now serve.

But here, as everywhere, function must precede organism. We must, as our earlier discussion pointed out, act first with *the whole of ourselves* in directions where we have, as yet, no organs to serve us, and where, in consequence, all is to us silent and invisible. It is so that we must strive to become aware of all that concerns the spiritual will and the inner life; and this striving of the whole of ourselves, this detached, recollected, pressing of our being, deeper and deeper into the "cloud of unknowing," is the practice of Meditation.

Its value and importance are beyond all telling, yet we can recognize something of them when we reflect upon what we have already seen, and thus realize that this practice must be the forerunner of every new development, every new acquisition of faculty—whether of insight or of skill. For those who seek the inner life, it is an absolute necessity. In the world to-day, dominated by materialism, misled by a misunderstood and mistaken theory of evolution, men are prone to think of the religious life as no more than the life of the personality made a little better, a little purer, and more unselfish. Like Abou Ben Adhem, "cheerly still," they are not troubled that they have no love of God, if they can point to a little good, done from what they fancy is a love of men. But the religious life, the inner life, the life of chêlaship, begins and ends in love of the Divine, and its love of men is but a facet of that higher love. Modern thought has so stressed unity that it has lost sight of duality, and theology itself has become forgetful of that to which all the saints and seers and mystics bear unbroken testimony: that above all else the "other world," native though the soul be to it, is characterized by its "otherness," and that there is nothing in mere goodness, nothing in the whole *personal* life, that alone can lift us to that world and to the consciousness of the soul. That resurrection is an act, not of personal, but of divine power. In the acorn alone is no ability to become the oak. It must open itself to, and be acted upon by, the hidden, universal forces of the earth and air and water, and the heat and magnetism of the sun; and when these have quickened it, and it begins to grow, and is no more an acorn but a sapling, it has entered a different

world; it is a different thing. In like manner the soul of man. Its consciousness is called forth from the consciousness of the personality, as Lazarus was called from the tomb, wrapped in grave-clothes, in answer to his Master's voice. Unless we can hear that call, we cannot answer it; but hearing, however faintly—as from far distances, "as in the winds from unsunned spaces blown," or as a stirring in the silence of unplumbed inner depths—we can obey. In meditation, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes though we be, and with a napkin bound about our face, we press to where that Voice is heard.

We have said enough. Here, too, perception must grow clearer through action. What is it that our inquiry has shown us? What lesson has it taught? Perhaps it can be summed in this: that in the lowliest, we can learn of the highest; that before we can become chêlas, we must become to our own soul even as our body is to us. And the more we study this model that the body sets before us, and compare it with what self-examination reveals in ourselves, the more clear it becomes that this transformation, which we must make, involves and explains, each and every one of the great ascetical rules which have been laid down from time immemorial for the disciple's guidance. We see that none is arbitrary; none may be omitted or skimped, for they are rooted in the very nature of consciousness.

HENRY BEDINGER MITCHELL.

Our life is but a little holding, lent
To do a mighty labour: we are one
With heaven and the stars when it is spent
To serve God's aims: else die we with the sun.

—GEORGE MEREDITH.

GLIMPSES OF THE ELEMENTAL SELF

THE *Secret Doctrine* was on my desk with the notes on the study I had undertaken. (The desk chair is not comfortable.) I really did not feel fit to approach the holy precincts of Theosophy. (Spiritual reading and study are too apt to wake up the conscience, when one is enjoying sluggishness.) One should be in a proper frame of mind in order to study. (It does call for effort to reach towards the Higher Mind.) Nevertheless, really and truly, I did not want to get out of touch. (A feeling of conscious virtue is like unto a comfortable parlour fire.) Hence, I refused to read that new novel my sister had asked me to read. ("What a good little boy am I"!) Besides, I should have had to get up to get it. (When at physical ease, how one does hate to be aroused to any effort.) But, "one may study Theosophy in any phase of life." (Sloth can be stronger than narcotized desire.) What had the Branch been considering of late? (One honestly is scared of wholly letting go.)

Oh! Yes—this question of discipleship. (It is true pride—certainly not "ignoble vanity"—to see one's self as "an interested student".) Instead of wasting time, I decided to "meditate" on "discipleship". (How the lower nature does love to call "sinking into vacuity", a "meditation".) "Here goes"—(How hard it is to keep concentration from becoming drowsiness. When does one fall asleep?)

It was easy for the Student to let go of any touch with the Fourth Dimension. That which is still tenuous must be grasped—it still lacks the power to grip.

Passage from the Third Dimension was slower—the Lower Mind fought hard against having its ceaseless chatter stilled ("stilled" according to the Drifter—never mind facts, when "drifting into negativeness"). Formed elements, such as Malevolence (draped out in the stolen habiliments of "Friendly Criticism"); Self-Indulgence (masquerading as "Health Protection"); Self-Reference (gaily dominoed as "Self-Examination"); Self-Pity (strenuously proclaiming itself to all in hearing as truly "Right Self-Identification"); and a whole troop of Ugly Sins (bedizened as "Choice Companions") —indeed the entire brood of Lower Nature—objected vigorously to having an established rapport broken. Does not their very energy, power, and life depend upon the continued attention, interest, and sympathy of the personality through its favourite daughter—troop and brood's adopted mother, the Maya of the Lower Self? Why should they not work to hold one in the psychic counterfeit of the lower Third Dimension?

Even when adrift, does the Law of Attraction and Repulsion work on in one. For the moment, the search for the "Centre of One's Being" (never mind on what plane of consciousness) carried the Student on into the Second Dimension—the lunar land of shadows; so-seemingly harmless, yet so truly deadly; the state where sin seems joy and virtue irksome; the plane of unreality, because all is inverted and unsubstantial. Its thin wraiths waved vile tentacles, that seemed like lovely arms, to the Student passing through—ready to envelope him with their miasma whenever he might return and have the folly to linger.

With bated breath the Student shot through the ceaselessly narrowing Land of the One Dimension—life-squeezing pseudologue of the One Dimension; that *state* which perhaps Adepts may meditate upon, but which even high Chêlas dare not pretend they comprehend; though ever to be sought after—and which certainly a mere Student might seek to forget for once—provided he be head-long bent for the "Centre of (his) Being"—on a certain plane!

At last "Nirvana" (for "Jack Horners"!) was reached—the "Heaven" of sin-eaters—"Pointland" itself. Then came aloud the "Song of Death," the polaric opposite of that "Song of Life" of *Light on the Path.* The Student listened:

"Of course I—I, *the* Student of all the T. S.; I, the most persistent seeker of the Path, against and over such barriers and obstacles as have confronted none other in all this Mahamanvantara; of course I am a disciple. Anyone may see it—everyone does see it. It is only tribute to my own unexcelled humility that leads others to criticize me at all or in any way. It inspires them greatly to see how stilly I meet all trials. I—the gallant, energetic fighter—am no Pharisee. I do not proclaim my own achievement of discipleship. I—I, the humble-minded and most excellent Chêla—need not make claim to be what I am—to be what I live. O Master ———"

Something happened (something always does happen whenever a Master is invoked). The only way to describe this happening (how can one compress the Fourth Dimension into the Third?) is to say, it was as if a mighty hand had grabbed the Student by the back of the neck—as one picks up a puppy. Through the several Dimensions, the Student was flashed—through Death-in-Attenuation; through the Lunar horrors and the Mundane perils, up into Planetary Spaces, only to be bumped—head first—against the roof of the Solar Dome. Then one eye was planted against one tiny crack and one ear pulled over until it lapped another rift.

The Student gazed. He saw before him a climbing mountain path, with corners where intersecting highways crossed. Behind each corner lurked dirty urchins—many misshapen. Up the way before him travelled many pilgrims, oblivious to all around them, save their Goal.

From time to time, the children shrieked agonizingly; or rolled in painful fits, with wild complaining. Pilgrims would stop to aid them. Sometimes

even Great Personages would hurry down the Mountain side—as if fearing lest the need might be real.

Sometimes a child would leap to its feet; to run off, with free vigour, as shrilly rose a chorused, "April Fool! April Fool!", while raucous adult laughter from unseen beings chimed in.

Sometimes a child would be picked up; to sob out "I have lost the purse my Father gave me to carry to my brother." The benevolent pilgrim who had come to assist, would begin a search. The purse would be discovered. The helper would reach eagerly for it—only to have the purse pulled back by a hidden string.

The acclaim of "April Fool! April Fool!" would ring out again—especially in the cases where some helper, eager to aid quickly in order to relieve the poignant agony of loss of what was precious to the child, would pitch forward, losing balance as the purse swept out under an outstretched hand.

Then, indeed, was the chorus wilder—"April Fool! April Fool! April Fool!" And happier and more raucous was the adult chiming.

The Student tried to pull away eye and ear. The episode was repellent. "What is the sense of making me attend to such a thing as this—it is, indeed, a disgusting waste of my valuable time."

Had the Silence voice? What was it that seemed to say—"Attend; and seek the meaning."

As the Student waited, it seemed as if the happenings were symbolic: symbolic of what? Why did the urchins seem to look like him? Why did it seem as if he were himself playing these cheap and miserable tricks? Why did the cries seem like his own voice?

The pressure of the Fourth Dimension was incomprehensible; yet it produced a reaction within that part of the Third which his understanding could reach —what had all this to do with him—how did he share in such vulgar antic and cruel joy?

Could it be that he counterfeited need? Could it be that his resolutions and pledges were of the nature of the "Purse-trick"? Did he hold in reserve, in his contact with desired discipleship, the unsportsmanlike trick of withdrawal—inexcusable, whatever the reason alleged? Were his cries and his acts real,—or not?

Who were the members of the adult chiming chorus? The Student had heard of the Powers of Evil. Were his slothful demands to have his duty done for him—his repeated withdrawals of resolutions and pledges—not merely harmful to those who would help, but also "pleasure"-bringing to the Sons of the Black Void? Had he not heard that it is on such homage from human beings that the Dark Ones live? Was he in the habit of feeding the Beasts by his own waste and misuse of Divine Compassion? Does he wish to trade on pilgrim or Master—for the benefit of the Death-dealers?

The Student roused. Something impelled him to leap from morris-chair into the uncomfortable desk seat. His eye fell on the word "Jesus" on the open page of *The Secret Doctrine*. He buried his head in his hands.

Whenever he wasted in vague phantasies the teaching and reading of the Spiritual World and of "the Living Wall," who hold back death and destruction from men; whenever he broke pledges and withdrew resolutions; whenever he talked about Masters and forgot the pregnant "Ye are my friends who keep my commandments"; whenever he played at Discipleship and acted it not—how did he differ from the brutal soldiery in Palestine nineteen centuries ago? They clothed the Western Master, Avatar and King indeed, in purple crowned Him—with thorns; gave Him a sceptre of reeds—to offer mocking homage, interspersed with cruellest blows. They were but Roman Legionaries—serving in a proconsulate—ignorant colonials—"Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Had the Student this excuse? Where was his "loyalty"—that first and vital step of *Lodge Dialogues?*

Can there be neutrality on a moral issue? Under which standard had he taken his place? Was his sloth cowardice? His sinning treason? His broken resolutions the mockery and beating of a King?

Would he be man, or beast—if ever he fell so low as again to be a mere mercenary or pressed man—not even a volunteer—in the service of those who seek to injure, hurt, and destroy all mankind—worse than that—each and every one he loves?

"Emotion not put to work by will is ever dangerous." The Student pushed books and papers off his desk—praying to All within him he might never forget, —and began the work that had long been needing his attention. He offered this effort that his will be set—once and for ever—aright; as a dependable servant of his Master; unfailingly faithful to his Master's great Cause—hence doing each "nearest duty."

U. G.
(George Woodbridge.)

All knowledge begins and ends with wonder, but the first wonder is the child of ignorance, the second wonder is the parent of adoration.—Coleridge.

PAUL VALÉRY AND THE UNIVERSAL MAN

—Maître, s'écriait le disciple, quel est ce Dieu brillant de majestueuse splendeur que je découvre au delà des nuages? Ne vous semble-t-il pas qu'il m'appelle?
Et le Bouddha, souriant, de répondre:
—C'est toi-même, ô mon fils.

CLEMENCEAU.

ON June 16, 1927, Paul Valéry was received as a member by the French Academy. It was a significant event. His predecessor, Anatole France, had been the lucid and gifted exponent of the skepticism and cynicism that characterized so many French minds during the years of reaction from 1870 to 1914. Valéry belongs to a new cycle. He is ardent and forceful, profound and intense. His election to the ranks of the Forty Immortals symbolizes the "change of polarity" which has occurred in French thought.

In so far as literature is a mirror of life, the works of these two Academicians illustrate, by their opposite tendencies, that great conversion of mind and heart which was the moving power of France during the Great War. Like all such conversions, it involved the emergence of the deepest and truest elements of the nation's life. It has been one of the many resurrections of France.

Anatole France has become so *démodé* that it is hard to appreciate what was the basis of his international fame. He himself has explained it. "The longer I live," he said, "the more I feel that only that which is easy is beautiful." No phrase could more adequately define the tastes of a generation that desired only to be amused as painlessly as possible. Anatole France lived and taught in the Garden of Epicurus. His fluent and sardonic thought passed lightly over the superficial paradoxes of existence, and he veiled his great erudition with an irony which respected nothing and nobody.

Valéry spares neither the reader nor himself. Though endowed with the power of clear and vivid expression, he has the just reputation of being one of the most difficult of authors. But his sentences are not obscure because of any desire to be "original" or "precious". They reveal an effort to give intelligible form to aspects of truth and beauty which have been so neglected by the generality of mankind that words and phrases to describe them can only be fashioned with difficulty out of the language of common speech. He is an explorer of uncharted tracts of consciousness, and is forced at every turn to represent things which have not yet received a name in any modern tongue. To keep his mind in training for so arduous an enterprise, he subjects it to an intense but varied discipline: he is simultaneously or successively poet, critic, savant, metaphysician.

"I put nothing above consciousness", he writes; "I would have willingly sacrificed many masterpieces, which I did not believe to be the effects of meditation, for one page that manifested conscious direction. . . . I had the mania of admiring in a work of art only the signs of the power that created it." Such a work can be understood only by an effort which is proportional to the effort that produced it. If we persist in identifying the true and the beautiful with the easy, we must pay the price for our inertia and self-indulgence. We remain fixed in the useless repetition of a pleasurable sensation. The real lover of truth and beauty knows that this is the way to automatism, to the suspension of growth, to death. Therefore, he is always seeking, with ardour, and, if necessary, with anguish, some new revelation of the powers latent in the Universe and in man. He uses the experience of the past but does not cling to its forms. Why does he live this dangerous and painful life, when he can stop among his treasures and become, at any moment, a sybarite and a dilettante? Probably he has not the time to pause for an explanation—assuming that he can give one in mental terms; but he has his reward in the acquisition of self-control, in the progressive elevation of his centre of self-consciousness.

Such seems to be the main theme of Valéry's work. It can hardly fail to be of interest to students of Theosophy, for it is a variation upon the great theme of the evolution of spiritual consciousness. Moreover, one often has the impression, in following the *detail* of his thought, that Valéry must have some acquaintance with theosophical literature. It appears certain, however, that this is not the case; that he writes like a student of Theosophy because his motive and objective do not essentially differ from those of a student of Theosophy. It should be added that he does not reveal the slightest interest in the so-called "occult arts" or in any of the counterfeits of Theosophy.

It is impossible here to achieve more than a cursory sketch of those phases of his thought which seem to approximate most closely to certain ideas frequently emphasized in theosophical literature. In his *Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci*, Valéry has incorporated a *Note and Digression* which is an inquiry into the nature of genius.[1] He meditates upon the relation between genius and the real Self of man, the "I am that I am". In a sense, this *Note and Digression* may be selected as an epitome of Valéry's own "genius", of his courage and aspiration and profundity.

"The Universe", he says, "is constituted in accordance with a plan, the profound symmetry of which is, in some way, present in the ultimate structure of our mind. *The poetic instinct should lead us blindly to the truth.*" It may be recalled that the word "poet" is derived from the Greek *poietes*, which means a maker, a fabricator, a creator, and which was not originally limited to the connotation of a maker of verbal harmonies. The first and greatest Poet is the Logos, the fashioner of the Universe, and the earthly poet is only His humble imitator.

There appears to be a fundamental distinction between man and the other

[1] The *Note and Digression* is included in a collection of essays: *Variété*, pp. 169–213; Librairie Gallimard, Paris, 1924.

creatures of this earth. Whereas they evolve in subjection to a plan imposed upon them and which they spontaneously obey, man must in increasing degree discover for himself his destiny, and must obey its laws with self-conscious intelligence. Valéry suggests that the appearance of man upon the stage is absolutely necessary to bring the drama of evolution to its proper conclusion. Nature, divorced from all association with self-conscious intelligence, can be represented only as a vast potentiality, like the primordial *Chaos* or Void of the Greek philosophers. Man alone can bring to their fruition in consciousness the seeds of wisdom and love which the ancient creative gods buried in the earth. As has been said, the perfected man is a "conscious collaborator with Nature."

This is the doctrine so excellently phrased in the axiom of Protagoras, that man is the measure of all things. It is the principle and justification of the great Humanist tradition which has built that which is durable in our Western civilization. In the view of the Humanist, civilization is not, as Rousseau pretended, a disease of our Mother Earth, but is the object and fulfilment of her labours. It is a *poem*, in the sense that it is a creation, and man becomes conscious of his real Self in so far as he participates in the *poetic* or creative activity of building or preserving a civilization. This does not necessarily imply an indefinite multiplication of tabloid newspapers and radios and Ford cars. According to its root-meaning, civilization is a covenant of citizenship, or—as one might say—"the nucleus of a universal brotherhood."

The world usually confuses genius with technique, with some mysteriously acquired or inherited aptitude. But Valéry identifies genius with real Humanism, that is to say, with real self-consciousness. The Humanist is only indirectly concerned with techniques and aptitudes. He needs and uses them, but he is not attached to them. He is, according to Valéry's expression, a "universal man". No human undertaking is alien to him, because his sense of identity is never immersed in any activity, however splendid, of his body or his mind.

Seeking a model for his study of the "universal man", Valéry turned to Leonardo da Vinci. Here was a being at once ardent and tenacious, versatile and concentrated, methodical and inspired. Above all, he found in the great man of the Renaissance a certain detachment, a quiet judgment determining and controlling a marvellous assemblage of talents. It was as if Leonardo's faculties were merely the instruments of a real Self which was placed above and outside them, so that he could change his outer guise from moment to moment, appearing as painter or sculptor or engineer or courtier or philosopher, and yet himself remain distinct.

Of course, there would be exaggeration here, if we were to assume that, as a matter of historical fact, Leonardo was a universal man. Students of Theosophy may recall the Mahatmas—and their modesty. But Valéry is careful to say that he is not trying to prove anything about the actual Leonardo. Leonardo is only a lay-figure, a type of a relatively advanced stage of human nature which appears, from the ordinary point of view, to be universal. "I

attributed to the unfortunate Leonardo my own difficulties, transporting the disorder of my mind into the complexity of his. I inflicted upon him all my desires, imagining that he had already attained them. I changed my incapacity into his supposed power. This was false but living . . . Hercules did not have more muscles than we, they were simply larger. I correspond to him, fibre to fibre, bone to bone, act to act, and this similitude makes it possible for me to imagine his Labours."

Valéry wisely makes no effort to define the "universal man". He conceives that such a being exists, attributes to him the name of Leonardo da Vinci, and imagines that he offers us some fragments of his self-knowledge. It makes interesting reading, but it is not easy. Valéry himself pauses at one point to quote from the Latin: *durus est hic sermo.* But one may add that if it seemed to be easy, we should have excellent reason to doubt either Valéry or ourselves.

"How might some individual of the first magnitude appear to himself, if he paused in the midst of his work and contemplated himself? . . . First, he considers that he is subject to our common needs and realities; then, he returns to the secret of a separate knowledge. He sees like us and he sees like himself. . . . He is absent and present. He maintains the kind of duality which ought to be maintained by a priest. He feels clearly that he cannot define himself by ordinary data and motives. *To live*, and even to live well, is only a means to an end for him: when he eats, he also nourishes another miracle besides his life; half of his bread is consecrated. To *act* is only an exercise . . . What can glory signify to him? To shine in the eyes of others is to perceive in them nothing but the glitter of false jewelry."

He maintains a kind of duality, but he knows himself to be, in truth, one and undivided. He distinguishes carefully between his consciousness, which is a unity, and the successive forms or states that appear mysteriously *within* his consciousness, just as he distinguishes, in his view of physical Nature, between space and the phenomena contained within space. The "universal man" cannot lose the sense of his identity as a unit, as the real Self, which is the perpetual centre of his being, even while he is supervising with the closest attention the series of his *states* of consciousness. This is his constant practical problem. If he relax and allow his sense of selfhood to sink into some mental or psychic phase, to the degree of his surrender he ceases to be self-consciously "universal". And he cannot enter into the common delusion that he is a separate entity, without depreciating or destroying the value of his work.

"For so self-conscious a soul (*pour une présence d'esprit aussi sensible à elle-même*) . . . all events of all kinds, life and death and thought, are nothing but subordinate symbols. As every *visible thing* is at once foreign, indispensable and inferior to *the thing which sees it*, the importance of these symbols, however great it may appear at each instant, becomes slight in comparison with the persistent act of attention which enables us to see them. Everything yields before the pure universality, the insurmountable generality which consciousness feels itself to be."

This *detachment* of the "universal man" is never negative, for it implies and

is, indeed, made possible by an unceasing exercise of *attention*. He cannot afford himself a single self-indulgence. He never takes a vacation, while he is in charge of a body; he is always in control, positive and purposeful. Valéry recalls a motto of Leonardo, "*hostinato rigore*", obstinate rigour, or—as it may be paraphrased—uncompromising self-discipline. "When this self-discipline has been established, a positive liberty is possible. What we usually call liberty is nothing but our capacity to obey every chance impulse; the more one enjoys it, the more closely he is chained to the same point, like some floating cork which is attached to nothing but which everything attracts, so that all the forces of the Universe are neutralized when they act upon it."

The liberated consciousness is above all *purposeful*. It is to the outer eye alone that the direction of its movement seems always to be changing. The "universal man" works consistently for the supreme objective of consolidating the sense of his true identity. "There must be an unassailable conclusion to a life so firmly controlled, which has treated all objects alike as obstacles to be surmounted or overturned. It is not a conclusion of its duration but a conclusion in itself." These obstacles themselves are part of the plan of life, for the soul transforms its awareness of their presence into the purpose of overcoming them. Resistance becomes a stimulus to act.

From the mixture of sensations and intuitions which are registered by his brain, the genius must continuously *discern and choose* those which suit his immediate purpose, and reject all others from the field of his attention. If every sublime act be based upon a sublime intuition, the important factor in its *execution* is not the intuition itself, but rather the cultivated ability to select a particular genuine inspiration from the multitude of its counterfeits, and to keep it in the foreground of consciousness until it has been confirmed by some appropriate action. "The true value of intuitive or inspirational elements does not proceed from the obscurity of their origin; . . . but from their encounter with our needs, and finally from the deliberate use to which we put them,—in other words, from the collaboration of the whole man."

The beautiful and the true become part of our self-consciousness in so far as they are *enacted and personified* in our lives. Otherwise they remain abstract potentialities dimly formulated by the intellect and obscurely divined by the heart, but ignored or denied by our imaginations and by our desires.

The beautiful and the true must be personified, but they have nothing to do with the thing which is ordinarily called the personality. Valéry is very clear as to this point.

"Our *personality* itself, which we vulgarly assume to be our ultimate and most profound *property*, is only a moveable and accidental thing. It is nothing but a secondary psychological divinity living in our mirror and answering to our name. It is of the order of the Penates. It is subject to grief, fond of perfumes like the false gods . . . It loves itself and is, therefore, docile and easy to lead. It is dispersed in the carnival of madness and is bizarrely subject to the monstrosities of dreams. Worse still, it is compelled, with sadness, to recognize the existence of equals and even of superiors; and this is for it a

bitter and inexplicable fact. . . . Its actions are always relative, its masterpieces are casual. Its best ideas come to it fortuitously and secretly, though it is careful not to admit such an origin for them. Moreover, it is not really sure of being *anybody;* it denies and disguises itself more easily than it affirms itself. . . . Its favourite activity is the telling of stories. It lives its romances and plays seriously a thousand rôles. Only its hero is never itself."

The Self which manifests the true and the beautiful is as different from this lower personality as can be. What, then, is the nature of its consciousness? Is it abstract and colourless, or is it intense and properly personal, to a degree that we cannot even faintly imagine? The great mystics have recorded their answer; but Valéry is not a mystic, and prudently hesitates to describe a state of being which he has not directly experienced. Nevertheless, his surmises, even if vague, appear to be remarkable enough. It would be difficult to find many counterparts of them in the literature of the modern Occident, outside the Theosophical Movement. Quite inevitably they call to mind the age-long speculations of the philosophers of India.

"The character of man is consciousness; and the character of consciousness is a perpetual exhaustion, a detachment without rest and without exception from everything that appears to it, whatever it be that appears,—an infinite activity, independent of the quality and of the quantity of phenomena, by means of which the spiritual man (*l'homme de l'esprit*) must finally reduce himself to an indefinite refusal to be anything whatsoever. His consciousness perceives that it corresponds or responds, not to a *world*, but to some system of higher degree, the elements of which are worlds. It recognizes itself to be deeper than the abyss of animal life and death. . . . Assured of its independence and invariability, it represents itself finally as the living image, the immediate offspring of the Being, without form or origin, which is responsible for and is associated with the whole experiment of the Cosmos. A little more, and there will remain for it only two entities essentially unknown: Itself and X. Both detached from all things, implied in all things, implying all things. Equal and consubstantial."

Valéry adds: "By thus exhausting the objects of its power without exhausting itself, this perfected consciousness is as little different from non-being as one can imagine." We may fancy some Oriental metaphysician saying those very words, with joy in his heart. They suggest a question to which in some remote æon we may be vouchsafed an answer. Assuming that "non-being" is identical with "perfected consciousness", does that mean the inevitable end of consciousness, or its real beginning?

In another passage, Valéry describes the bewilderment felt by the soul when it first faces resolutely "the strangest problem that can be conceived", the problem that is forced upon us by the apparent existence of other souls. He imagines the soul solving the riddle of the One and the Many, not by any intellectual gymnastics, but by the sacrifice of itself. "It is not his dear *person* which he (the spiritual man) has exalted to so high a degree, since he renounces it even while thinking of it, and since he substitutes for it, in the

place of the *subjective* principle, the Self without qualities, which is without name and history, which is no more tangible nor less real than the centre of gravity of a planetary system. . . . And now transported by his zeal to be unique, and illumined by his ardent desire to be all-powerful, he surmounts all creations and all works, even his greatest purposes, at the same time that he lays aside all tenderness for himself and all preference for his own will. He immolates in an instant his individuality. He feels himself to be pure consciousness in which there can be no division. He is the Self, the Universal Pronoun, the Name of That which is without form."

One may venture to add explicitly what seems to be implicit in these sentences. Valéry has imagined the attainment of that state where the "universal man" has earned the right to rest from his labours. Yet, if he is, indeed, universal, if he has actually "immolated his individuality", he will continue to work for others. Liberated from the obligation to perfect his own human nature, he is free to toil, without reservation and without impediment, for the perfection of humanity.

Valéry is, as has been said, a difficult writer. It is easy to misinterpret him and to read into his thought meanings which were remote from his intention. Nevertheless, the quotations given would seem sufficiently to testify to the remarkable resemblances, at many points, between his views and certain ideas cherished by many students of Theosophy. One may, perhaps, bring out the resemblances more sharply by referring to Madame Blavatsky's article on "Genius", published in *Lucifer*, V, 227–233.

"The flame of genius," wrote Madame Blavatsky, "is lit by no anthropomorphic hand, save that of one's own Spirit. It is the very nature of the Spiritual Entity itself, of our Ego, which keeps on weaving new life-woofs into the web of reincarnation on the loom of time. . . . This it is that asserts itself more strongly than in the average man, through its personality; so that what we call the 'manifestations of genius' in a person are only the more or less successful efforts of that Ego to assert itself on the outward plane of its objective form—the man of clay—in the matter-of-fact daily life of the latter. The Egos of a Newton, an Æschylus, or a Shakespeare, are of the same essence and substance as the Egos of a yokel, an ignoramus, a fool, or even an idiot; and the self-assertion of their informing genii depends on the physiological and material construction of the physical man. . . . That which makes one mortal a great man and of another a vulgar, silly person is, as said, the quality and make-up of the physical shell or casing; and the adequacy or inadequacy of brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the real, *Inner* man; and this aptness or inaptness is, in its turn, the result of Karma. . . .

"Behold, in every manifestation of genius—*when combined with virtue*—in the warrior or the Bard, the great painter, artist, statesman, or man of Science . . . the undeniable presence of the celestial exile, the divine *Ego* whose jailor thou art, Oh man of matter! . . .

"Original and great genius puts out the most dazzling rays of human intellectuality; . . . it is never eccentric, though always *sui generis;* and no man

endowed with true genius can ever give way to his physical, animal passions. In the view of an humble Occultist, only such a grand altruistic character as that of Buddha or Jesus, and of their few close imitators, can be regarded, in our historical cycle, as fully developed GENIUS."

Valéry's "universal man" is, of course, no more "fully developed" than Valéry's own genius. He is the creature of an author's imagination. However, he is, at least, more convincing as a type of advanced humanity than are most of the strange entities who masquerade as "Adepts" in occult novels. It is part of Valéry's artistry and good sense, that he has attempted no more than a sketch. The reader is free to fill in as many missing details as he likes.

Meanwhile, we can be grateful for being reminded, in distinctive fashion, of those attributes of the Genius which we can begin to manifest here and now, however humble our task or however lowly our talents. No aspirant will be the poorer if he persistently cultivate purpose, detachment, attention, discernment, decision, and the will to execute what he decides.

S. L.

My earthly tasks are of God's appointment. To keep a high and pure spirit: to do the small things of every day with feet on earth but heart in Heaven: this be my aim—so to act according to the purpose of my being, to the Glory of God.

—W. J. Knox Little.

STUDIES IN PARACELSUS

VII

IN the eighth chapter of the first Book of *Philosophia Sagax*, Paracelsus speaks of Adept Medicine, telling us that this division of medicine deals only with those diseases which we contract from the heavens and the operations of the heavens. By the heavens, he means the *astra*, as distinguished from the Divine. All diseases, he says, arise either from the *astra* or from the earthly elements; all diseases must be treated by remedies derived from their own source or plane. Remedies taken from the earthly elements are not effective against diseases derived from the *astra*. The earth with its elements plays its own part, but there is also a Pharmacist in the firmament, who guides the powers belonging to the firmament. In the firmament, as on the earth, there is a Magister, and the wise physician should learn from the Preceptor whom God has placed at the head of the invisible schools in the firmament. In these invisible schools he learns to make use of impressions, powers and secrets which can be infused into a physical body for use against diseases which have their origin in the firmament, just as extracts of medicinal plants can be brought from a garden and put into a box. But the physician must learn these secrets from the supernal world, as Saint Paul learned. When thus speaking of the firmament, Paracelsus appears to mean the astral and psychic planes. He says that there are three worlds: the Celestial, the Firmamental and the Earthly, and that there is a Magister in each. Ascending in spirit to the Celestial, Saint Paul "found in the third heaven the Magister with whom he might speak".

Paracelsus adds that Adept Philosophy cannot be learned from men; it can be gained only from that School in which it is practised, and the learning must derive from another, namely, from Him who is Adept, from Him who is Himself Adept Philosophy. In what is written we seek *sensus* and *intellectus;* that is, significance and reasoning. For in the hidden significance is the whole treasure of what is contained in the writing. The significance must come from him who planned the writing, for no common man can infuse a hidden significance into writing. And the matter is more potent, the less dependence there is upon reasoning. In the same manner Adept Philosophy is not a science devised by man, for it comes from the Supernal, which one man cannot impart to another. Medicinal herbs, seeds, gems, the four earthly Elements, are as the letters of what is written; they serve to convey the inner significance. To illustrate the Supernal Science, Paracelsus cites the words of Christ, "Learn of Me", and the Pentecostal inspiration through which the Apostles were able to speak and act. The body formed of the earthly Elements does not enter the School of Adept Philosophy; the sidereal Spirit enters. He who

enters that School as a disciple will gain a more lofty and exact knowledge of the Magnalia, the great secrets of Nature, than can be attained by flesh and blood, which "cannot inherit the kingdom of God". He who seeks to learn from the Eternal concerning that body which is of the Eternal, must apply to this School as one who is fit for its discipline. Only the regeneration brought about in man can constitute a pupil ready to be led into that School in which are taught the things of the Eternal. Our aspiration must be directed upward, not outward or downward. If we lead the sidereal body into the school of the earthly Elements, or impel the disciple of the Eternal into the sidereal school, or the school of the earthly Elements, by both these courses we shall incur sin. He is truly wise who understands that there is within him the power to learn, not only concerning the earthly Elements and the sidereal mysteries, but also, and finally, to apprehend the things of the Eternal. To this end man has been so constituted that he is not as the brutes, but knows himself as man, able to learn in these three schools. In this way three Lights glow in man, two of which, in relation to the third, are shadows; yet, none the less they are lights of the world. The principle of this School is, Seek first the Kingdom of God. To this all else will be added.

Paracelsus applies the same method to the Science of Adept Mathematics. Adept Science is that which can remove the body of night and darkness, and therefore the earthly hindrances, from the sidereal. Thus the external is night; it is not science and art, but obscurity. The external may be depicted as on a map, but it is not living; the Mover is lacking. In Mathematics, as in Philosophy, the teaching is, that we must abandon the lower and go forward to the higher, leaving the "body of the Elements" as our centre of attraction and passing through the sidereal to the Eternal. Standing firm in the Eternal, man can then illuminate the sidereal and the elemental. Paracelsus quaintly affirms that the elemental bears a grudge against the two higher realms: "This hates the two other schools".

In the ninth Chapter Paracelsus explains that there is a wide range of difference in the *astra*, the sidereal forces which guide men. There may be so great simplicity in their manifestation that those who are guided by them may appear foolish; therefore art and science must be used to discern between this simplicity and delusion. As he puts it, "the *astra* can divine extravagantly". Those men who lead a modest and honest life, who are simple and of humble estate, manifest "artless" wisdom. The ancients considered this problem of divination with careful meditation, so that they might keep body and mind undefiled when about to undertake magical operations of this kind, whether through trance, or contemplation, or the direct activity of the Soul. Through this careful procedure the ancients obtained great sapience, many arts and wonderful prophecies, which can never be attained by those who are given to wantonness and intemperance.

Concerning divination, he explains that man has a sidereal body corresponding to the external *astra*. These two converse together reciprocally, if the sidereal body be not perturbed by the body of the Elements; for these gifts

are not given to the body of the Elements, but belong to the sidereal body. If the body of the Elements be at rest, as in sleep, the sidereal body dwells in its own operation, because it does not sleep or rest. But, if the body of the Elements prevails and predominates, the sidereal body becomes torpid. When the body of the Elements grows quiet, dreams approach; for even as the *astra* operate, dreams come with their revelations. In proportion as the *astra* are well or badly ordered, so is the coming of dreams; while, as has been already recorded, the *astra* reveal nothing to him who is over-confident and too circumspect. Further, ambition and the conviction of one's own sagacity hinder the sidereal operations and resist the *astra*. Therefore, sidereal operation belongs only to those who know how to respond wisely to the *astra*. Paracelsus clearly shows that the *astra* act on the sidereal body; when the sidereal body is ready for the *astra*, and the *astra* themselves are prepared, wondrous things occur in the revelation of present and past and future things. The entire tenor of this Chapter shows that there are natural diviners, those who have the innate qualities of this gift; but for the perfection of the gift both science and art are needed; and in these are included the preparation of the sidereal body and the *astra* by the discipline and purification which Paracelsus increasingly insists on as a means for bringing to life and activity the body of regeneration with its supernal qualities. In all these divisions of "Astro-nomy", the "science of the *Astra*", the distinction is maintained between the external body (the body of the Elements), and the realm of the firmament, which operates on the body of the Elements through the firmamental or sidereal body. The functions of the body of the Elements and the sidereal body are within the domain of the Natural, and are illuminated by the Light of Nature. So far, we appear to be concerned with the domain of the astral and psychic, and Paracelsus deals severely with those who rest content with these lower realms, declaring that it is this confinement to the lower realms which causes the natural arts to degenerate and produce only uncertain and delusive results. He strongly urges incessant effort to pass upward from the natural to the celestial, saying that these imperfect arts and sciences are transcended by the direct activities of the divine Image which receives the Light of Heaven. No longer "seeing through a glass darkly", the real man in the Light of Heaven "sees face to face".

Concerning the art of divination, Paracelsus draws a distinction between true *Divi*, divinely inspired men, and those who do not rise above the sidereal. He adds a warning of the danger of "astral intoxication": as natural wine intoxicates, so there is intoxication through the *astra;* just as drugs may render men insane or drunken, so is it with the *astra*. There is natural wine and the wine of Olympus, which the Greeks called nectar; while it may be suitable for the Olympians, this nectar may intoxicate the natural man. In relation to food and wine, there is always the danger of excess unless due care be taken. And excess is of three kinds: that belonging to the body of the Elements, that belonging to the sidereal, and that belonging to the celestial or divine. Where "the Spirit quickens", that which comes down from above, from the Spirit, is good. Thus repletion from the divine is alone good, and all other repletions

are to be guarded against. The Apostles were regarded as drunkards by the populace, for those only are taught of God who are intoxicated by the new wine of the Holy Spirit. Paracelsus insists that we must distinguish between this wine of the Holy Spirit, the Olympian or sidereal wine, and the natural wine.

By Inclination, Paracelsus means the pressure of an external force, generally from the higher realms. From the *astra* come the inclinations which perfect the natural man in mind, heart and spirit; and man receives the Light of Nature in those things in which he should operate according to that Light. Inclination is a secret operation in man whereby that is fashioned in him, which Nature cannot fashion unaided. But it is madness to plead that evil "inclinations", like theft and gaming, are thus imposed on man by superior powers; they come wholly from within the man himself. And here we may remember what Paracelsus has said concerning wolf-men, toad-men and the dregs of the brute in the Quintessence. We are not compelled to obey inclination against our wills. Inclination of the flesh comes from the Elements; inclination of the mind comes from the *astra;* Inclination of the spirit comes from the supernal and divine. If we rightly examine the Inclination from above, we shall discover it to be a Preceptor, guiding and informing us. As nothing can be accomplished in the spiritual world without the Divine Command, so nothing can be accomplished in the natural world without the Light of Nature. Man is made perfect through the Command and the Light.

More imperative than Inclination is what he calls Impression, a "perfecting force" in the Light of Nature, evidently an aspect of Karma in its wider aspect of cosmic law. Impression thus resembles what is called predestination. It works through the superior *astra*, and affects all mankind, but does not coerce or vanquish all. "Many are called, but few are chosen", and the few make use of the tendency of Impression, rather than yield to it.

We come now to the concluding part of this abstruse work, the second Book of *Philosophia Sagax*. Paracelsus begins by affirming that the Divine Power performs its operations through a medium, working outward from the interior to the exterior. As symbols of this interior force within exterior forms, he cites the Star of Bethlehem and Gideon's fleece, both of them external manifestations of inner spiritual power. He adds that, as compared with the exterior, the potency of the interior force is enormous. So there are media between the Divine and external nature; just as the herb is the medium which bears the healing power used by the true physician, so among men the Saint is the medium through whom the Divine works in what are called miracles.

The purpose of his teaching is that man may understand both external things and the "interior heaven", and distinguish between them, just as Shankaracharya taught his disciples to "discern between the mortal and the Immortal". In the Introduction, Paracelsus suggests that the sins of men by their reaction cause effects in "heaven", which produce warning signs; so that what unenlightened "astronomers" describe as "evil influences" are really punishments evoked by sins; men should make use of them as warnings, and should avail themselves of the opportunities granted them to obey the

divine law and improve their ways. This would seem to be a description of Karma as the law of action and reaction in the Universal Mind.

While in the first Book, Paracelsus seeks to show the working of the *astra* upon and through the Elements, and the evolution of natural sapience and science through experience of the external world, the second Book deals with the Soul. This corresponds to the distinction which Mme. Blavatsky makes, between Psychic and Noetic Action, in an article in the first volume of *Lucifer*. In undertaking to speak of the Soul, its nature and conditions, Paracelsus first seeks to explain the method of the union of body and Soul, with the cause and generation of what he calls "*immortal flesh*", and the conjunction of mortal and immortal flesh into a single Image. In the first Book he says that man is composed of the "slime of the earth", but this primal material is derived no less from heaven than from earth. What comes from the earth returns to the earth, and that which takes its origin from heaven returns to heaven. From earth comes the form, but the Spirit comes from God. Into the form made of the slime, God breathed the Spirit which dwells there as a stranger in an inn. The real man, man according to his own essence, is invisible; but in relation to the nature of the sidereal, he is not invisible. Though invisible, the sidereal man is not immortal; for neither the elemental nor the sidereal attain to heaven, but only the real man, who is Spirit.

As has been already set forth, God made the divine Image for the purpose of manifestation, to make visible the invisible. This first Image, being of God, existed long before Adam, just as Christ was before Adam. Man was built in accord with the Image of God; and, "through the Image, Man is the invisible *persona* of God; as if God had said: None sees My *person;* yet by means of the slime I will make that very thing visible." The mouth of God is the *spiraculum vitæ*, "the breath of life", which *spiraculum* is the "slime of the heavens", the celestial protyle. Nothing that is earthly shall rise again, but we men shall rise again in Christ; yet, if we be not in Christ, we shall rise again, not in nature, but in the infernal realm. Each goes to its own realm, the natural to the natural, the sidereal to the sidereal, the heavenly to the heavenly; and nothing of the heavenly will be restored to the natural, save in so far as the natural is permeated by the heavenly. Man was not made "to eat and drink and die", but that he might be heir to the kingdom of God. But in that kingdom he is no heir by right, for he is of the earth, and earth attains not to heaven. The bodily vehicle was given to man in order that through it he might manifest the divine Image; it was not given that he might eat and drink. Man must supply food to the earthly body in order that the vehicle may be sustained; he must also "feed the Image" in order that it may be made manifest. So long as man lives according to the flesh, the Soul is held in subjection, unable to act, so that unless man in the flesh lives according to the Spirit in the will of God, he does wrong, for only as he so lives, will the body obey the Spirit. The Spirit returns to God who gave it; it enters the body through the *spiraculum vitæ*, the "breath of life", and departs through the *spiraculum mortis*, the "breath of death", the Spirit thereafter being enriched

because it has been joined to the body, in this differing from the angels. Thus the "celestial flesh" is born from heaven, by regeneration "through water and the Spirit", and in this celestial flesh we shall see God and our Redeemer. Hitherto, mortal flesh has been considered, but the words quoted from Job speak of the celestial flesh, for man sees God in the body of regeneration.

Now, concerning the Soul (*anima*): Soul is one thing, Spirit another. When the Spirit is infused into the body, it is named the Soul; thus the Soul is the form of Spirit after the formation of man, when God breathed into man the "breath of life". But there is al o another spirit of inferior nature, which is common to man and the beasts. It has the natural life, not the eternal, and it dies and perishe with the flesh. Though cognate with flesh, it is nevertheless truly spirit, yet it is distinguished from the higher Spirit because it is mortal, while the Spirit, given of God, belongs to eternal life. The lower spirit, belonging to Nature, leads to cognition of Nature; the higher bestows divine cognition. The Soul is the central region of man's being, in which dwell all spirits, both good and evil. Paracelsus compares the Soul to a king with his council, some of whom are of good intent, and some evil. All in turn make suggestions and the king listens to all, but he alone makes the decisions, accepting one counsel and rejecting others. The Soul has its dwelling in the heart, of which it takes possession. Veneration and love of God should proceed from the whole heart, and whatever is opposed to God's will should be expelled from the heart, so that the Soul may remain altogether pure, sifted and purged and clean utterly. "Therefore, regarding the Soul, let it be known that it is the breath from the mouth of God incarnated through Nature, that is, in mortal flesh, which was created in trust for the living flesh of regeneration".

Now, in man the essence and property of the sidereal spirit is the human reason and worldly sapience, which belong, not to the body of flesh, but to the firmament, being in man a bodiless spirit, yet with the shape of the human form, as a man appears in a mirror. Now, in relation to the Soul, know that man has a third sapience. There is, first, the carnal sapience of the animal; second, the sidereal sapience and science of the human reason; and, third, the spiritual sapience. The first two are mortal; the third is from God and brings divine virtues. As the human mind is coloured by the man's acts, so the Soul is coloured by his thoughts. And as man colours the Soul, his actions follow, and thus the Soul manifests itself. In this alchemical work, the moral sense, the conscience, is the guide; it is innate in us, springing from the Soul, and urges us to obey the two commandments laid down by Christ: "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart and all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself". Thus in our hearts is hidden the Quintessence, born in us from God, and we must discern between this divine element and the natural slime, from which our mortal nature is formed. After death, the Soul is no longer encased in the flesh of the body. If it be close to the elect, the Soul will rise again in the flesh of the redemption. The Soul is by nature as the angels, and man should take on this angelic nature. The Soul is man, apart from earthly things; "it is man, by whom it is, in whom it is, and who it is".

In the second Chapter, Paracelsus again considers the natural slime in contrast with the Soul. In the slime, both good and evil are mingled, the nature of the brute and the nature of man, and to these the Quintessence is added. There is also the inbreathing of the divine Image, and this brings the possibility of regeneration through Christ, so that the spiritual life governs the natural life; man, being endowed with the power of choice, may choose to live either according to the external nature, or according to the internal nature, his life being led by divine sapience in harmony with the Soul, which is the medium, or "angel" of communication with the divine life. Summing up this power of choice, Paracelsus tersely says: "Man may be a swine; but need not be".

While the slime is in process of formation, seeds of the brute nature are carried over into the Quintessence, so that man may choose to develop in accordance with these seeds, and may become a hog, a fox, a viper, a dragon, or a basilisk. Adamic flesh and blood cannot enter the divine kingdom; the Soul must be purified, as by fire, from all impurities due to the Adamic flesh, through death which separates man from the flesh. Thus death has a purpose and a meaning; it is the opportunity for purgation; an understanding of this process will show man how to enter the true path, which is his if he chooses to ask, to seek, and to know.

Christ was born for man's sake, and suffered that man might be redeemed and made fit for the kingdom of God. And, since mortal flesh cannot enter the kingdom, another kind of flesh, a new body, was made possible. From the Spirit comes forth the living, "quickened" flesh, destined, not for death, but for life. Paracelsus discusses the Virgin Birth of Christ: as Christ was made man through the Holy Spirit, so "we men, who aspire to the kingdom of Heaven, should put off flesh and blood, and be born a second time of a Virgin and Faith, being made flesh by the Holy Spirit . . . Adamic flesh produces nothing". The Holy Spirit forms the "quickened" flesh. Baptism is the Virgin, and Paracelsus cites the baptism of Christ in the Jordan, the water and the dove being external symbols only. When men are thus reborn from above, their "quickened" flesh can enter the kingdom of Heaven and move there, as mortal flesh moves here on earth. Thus are born "heavenly astronomers", who speak concerning God. They are heavenly Theologians, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Saints of God.

Christ could not effect his purpose through Adamic flesh and blood; "quickened" flesh is needed as a vehicle for him who is born through Christ from the supernal. The Apostles were born in a new body, and in this they left all and followed Christ. Paracelsus then discusses the question whether the Apostolic function debars man from all natural pleasures. Repeating what he has said concerning the life according to the internal and supernal, he says that man must make his choice between this world and the eternal; he must discern between the functions of the mortal and immortal worlds, once he has received his divine commission.

In the remaining Chapters of the second Book, Paracelsus speaks of Astronomy, considered from the natural and the supernal points of view.

If there is a Magic of the external, there is also a special Magic of the internal, far surpassing the external in potency. If there are external senses, there is also an internal sense, dwelling in the heart; and the divine Astronomer distinguishes between dead spirits and living spirits by the heavenly clairvoyance of direct perception. He draws a sharp distinction between the shared consciousness of the heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and the mob consciousness of the external, influenced by psychic vagaries. He concludes by depicting a community of divine interest of all, for all, and all in God, inspired by God.

A. KEIGHTLEY.

Misfortune opens the soul to illumination which prosperity is unable to discern.—LACORDAIRE.

The perfectly obedient never uses delay; he himself forestalls the precept.
—ST. BERNARD.

GRATITUDE

THOSE who are interested in dates and numbers may have noticed that the April issue of the THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY completes Volume XXV, making a total issue of 100 copies since the QUARTERLY was founded. On such an anniversary, the present writer would like to express his heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been concerned with the issue of the magazine that has meant so much in the lives of members of the Society. Their hearts will instantly turn to the founder and first editor who so generously gave his time, devotion and genius to the work, and inspired those about him with the task of maintaining, in all subsequent issues, the same high standard of achievement. There are those who have worked for the QUARTERLY in every one of the 100 numbers, since the beginning, and it needs but a little imagination to realize something of the time and labour involved,—a labour of love, it is true, and a privilege of service which they gladly undertake. We turn, with grateful hearts, to these older members, our leaders, whose help and inspiration have kept the Society true to the purpose of its Founders, and to the Masters of Wisdom, under whose guidance the Society has continued its work in the world for more than half a century. Something of the ideals, and of the work and purpose of the Society, is seen reflected in the pages of the QUARTERLY, and readers who receive much help from each number may welcome the opportunity to put on record their appreciation.

It has been the good fortune of the present writer to spend some time in looking up the past volumes of the QUARTERLY, since the time when it was founded. The reading has proved of absorbing interest and, viewed as a whole, does not present a series of disconnected articles, but rather a continuous epic, a cycle of thought, ideal and endeavour, which embody a single unfailing purpose. It is that unity in diversity which makes its lasting appeal to so many different readers. The subjects treated present a wide range of topic, so that every interest can find recognition; the method of approach to Truth welcomes every contribution that can shed further light through united aspiration; but, deeper than intellect and method, is seen the spirit which illumines and the life which animates the work of the Society. In the QUARTERLY for January, 1911[1], there is published a letter which sets out the true purpose of the Founders, in terms which arrest and compel attention: "The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity." Those who have the opportunity to study that letter again, will find it a subject for deep thought and profound thankfulness, in seeing the ideal it sets forth, and the manner in which the plan has been worked out in practical achievement.

If the reading of past volumes of the QUARTERLY be treated as an epic,

[1] *The Theosophical Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, p. 197.

it will be found not wanting in the romance, adventure and chivalry which are the inspiration of the epic poems of old. Few members have the time to review the past numbers in detail, but there are many who experience, as they look through the volumes, that their deepest interests can there find satisfaction. It would be impossible to comment on the different articles that are of universal appeal, but most readers find in the series of the "Notes and Comments," in the "Screen of Time," in the "Elementary Articles" and "Letters to Students," subjects which illumine their thought and give invaluable guidance in the conduct of their lives. They illustrate also, in a living manner, the way in which the Society has fashioned its policy and directed its action, through all the change of time and circumstance. Throughout the Great War, there was maintained a definite policy, founded on principles of justice and truth; in the "peace" which has followed, the call of a trumpet can still be heard, as it summons to the Battle of Life.

The reader who begins to consider how much he has gained from the QUARTERLY, finds it difficult to express his gratitude to the editors and their work. Gratitude has been defined as a "lively sense of favours to come," and, in the case of the QUARTERLY, readers look to future issues with glad hope and expectation. Yet they would be ashamed if theirs was merely a passive part, to sit still and applaud, while others bear the burden of the work and toil. They find a constant desire to respond, in some way, to the help so generously given, but perhaps—taking note of their small stock of ability, or their total inexperience in the use of the pen—they are tempted to think that there is little for them to do. Yet if the pen does not come readily into use, every member has learnt, from advice oft-repeated, that it is his privilege and opportunity to use the spiritual weapons that belong to those who, in joining the Society, find themselves enlisted in the Cause of Truth. How this may be done, has been expressed in many different ways, in QUARTERLY articles, and discussion at Branch meetings. There is one method which is within the reach of all, from the latest recruit to the veteran soldier, which consists in dedicating all work, action and thought, throughout the day, as spiritual capital for the Cause of Theosophy. This demands, it is true, a training in concentration, attention and purification, which must be the work of a life-time, yet we all have it in our power to make a beginning. Once I read of a woman whose time was entirely occupied with arduous work to make her daily living; that work took her about the streets of a city, and she made it a habit, whenever she entered a tramcar, or street vehicle, to say, "Thy Kingdom come," for each occupant of the carriage. So she went her way, scattering gifts, making her daily work serve as a channel of help for others, in the service of her King. In striking analogy to this, it is recorded in one of the back numbers of the QUARTERLY,[2] in a discussion concerning chêlaship, that Mr. Judge "would not so much as get on to a street car without thought of the One Self."

A further illuminating hint was once given by the same wise director in the spiritual life, to one who found himself unable, through force of circumstance

[2] *The Theosophical Quarterly*, Vol. VII, p. 274.

to do active outer work for the Society. He advised the student to make it a habit, on different days of the week, to pray for the work of one or other of the Branches of the Society, and said that "the real and best and highest service could be rendered in this way."[3] It is interesting, for those who follow that method, to trace the locality of the different Branches, across the map of the world; in time they will come to realize that there is a continuous track reaching around the earth, which they may follow on the winged feet of prayer and aspiration.

One of the mediæval mystics reminds us that, "To prayer belongeth thanking,"[4] and so, once more, our gratitude can be expressed in frequent thanksgiving directed to the work of The Theosophical Society. It does not take long, or demand any expenditure of effort, to raise the heart and mind in a fervent act of thanks; such a habit depends rather on the orientation of the will. There is a happy Saint, Felix of Cantalice, whose favourite ejaculation was, *Deo gratias*,—so much so that the little boys in the street used to run after him calling out, "Brother *Deo gratias*." When the time came for his passing from this world, he was well content, and begged the Brothers to say *Deo gratias* for him, when he could no longer speak for himself.

Of the greatest of the Saints, it is usually recorded that they radiated an atmosphere of joy, which was felt by all those who came into contact with them. Joy is one of the keynotes of Theosophy, as has often been pointed out—more particularly in *Fragments*—and students of Theosophy should be distinguished by their deep and abiding joy. Many QUARTERLY articles have been contributed, at one time and another, by different members, showing why they entered the Society; such writings form profoundly interesting records of human experience, of earnest search and endeavour, and of the joy of homecoming once the purpose of Theosophy had been perceived. Some members have pointed out that the process of joining the Society extends over our whole life-time, since we do not fully attain to membership till our entire nature has been transformed by understanding its true purpose, and dedicating all our powers towards its fulfilment. When that day comes, for each one of us, there will rise up towards Heaven such a *Deo Gratias* as will prove that we have realized to the full our life's work, and are able to give permanent expression of our gratitude to the leaders of the Movement.

READER.

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[3] *The Theosophical Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, p. 58.
[4] Juliana of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*.

A STUDY OF FIELDS OF FORCE

One thing in each is prominent above the rest, but it also shows forth all.

PLOTINUS.

The world globes itself in a drop of dew.

EMERSON.

All that science has determined regarding the use of mirrors, and the reflection and refraction of light in connection with them, can be advantageously investigated by those wishing really to pursue the subject . . .

CAVÉ.

"YOU will recall," said the Mathematician, "that rays of light proceeding from one focus of an ellipse, are reflected from the periphery through the other focus."

The student had forgotten it, but the words awakened an echo within, and touched some spring of action which led him to undertake certain experiments with pencil and paper. The earlier rough sketches of circles and of ellipses traversed by lines, revealed the fact that the simple geometrical truth possessed a content with peculiar metaphysical values if one could only extract it, and as the experiments continued—particularly after square and compass were brought in to aid in the adventure—more and more of what was hidden began to show itself. This is in strict accord with, and another illustration of, the thesis of an article entitled "Thought, Purpose and Creation" which appeared in the QUARTERLY for January, 1927. The earlier incarnations of an idea, so we are told, reveal something of its nature, but they also reveal deficiencies in the concept; this provokes further experimentation and betterment of the expression, till at last a form may be achieved which reflects the full content of the idea. It was in some such way as this that the figures about to be described gradually builded themselves.

Due to the hampering restrictions of paper, one is obliged to represent them in two dimensions, yet one finds that the whole matter becomes clearer and takes on an added richness when one thinks of them in terms of three-space. Since the ellipse is the basic element of the flat constructions, one may substitute in thought the analogue of the ellipse, viz. the ellipsoid—that solid figure which is generated by the revolution of the ellipse upon its major axis. The ellipsoid is only a distorted globe—a falling away from Pythagorean perfection—and is assumed when a plastic sphere, enclosed by a surface tension membrane, is subjected to stress. A dewdrop hanging to a grass blade, and a soap bubble attached to a pipe bowl, are two familiar illustrations of natural ellipsoids. It is a form which nature loves.

But the forces which build up the ellipsoid are not confined to material

manifestation only. Without leaving the plane of sensuous phenomena we can assure ourselves that an ellipsoidal field of force surrounds and connects the opposite poles of a magnet; for if one sprinkle iron filings upon a piece of paper laid over the magnet, they arrange themselves in a way which declares immediately that they are responding to an invisible but very real and very powerful field of force.

It is quite probable, too, that similar electro-magnetic fields link the stars and planets with one another, and if this be true of the heavenly bodies, one can hardly deny the same phenomenon to the elements of the physicist's atom —that miniature analogue of a solar system with its central proton and whirling electrons. It is quite possible that all glowing bodies, such, for example, as a group of lighted lamps, are connected in a similar manner—a point which may have a peculiar bearing upon old tales of ceremonial magic.

The ellipsoidal form is highly characteristic of the propagative bodies by means of which both animals and plants tide their precious life germs through periods of latency. It is assumed by the spores of bacteria, algæ, fungi, etc.; by the seeds and fruits of flowering plants, and the eggs of animals, yet these bodies are so very different in their natures that only a biologist can well appreciate their diversity of structure and origin. Indeed there is evidence that from the living nucleus itself—from the very citadel of cellular life—waves of energy emanate under certain conditions and build up the same familiar figure. For when a cell nucleus undergoes mitotic division, a peculiar structure called the nuclear spindle appears. It develops between two foci, or small polar granules (centrosomes), and is composed of numerous delicate threads known as spindle fibres. The appearance of the resultant figure suggests the presence of certain invisible lines of force, which stream out from the centrosomes and provoke a material representation of themselves in the cell. We may say that the ellipsoid has incarnated itself in protoplasm just as it "inmetallized" itself in the iron filings.

One suspects that the physicist would find himself sadly taxed to explain the real nature of all these fields of force, and we have no intention of trespassing upon such highly speculative territory. We must be content for the present to recognize their presence and to discuss a few of their elementary properties.

Many questions at once press forward for solution. Are the magnetic fields limited outwardly? Are they bounded by transmitting and reflecting films analogous to the surface tension membranes of a water drop or a soap bubble? Are these films illustrative of a recent definition of matter as "warped space-time"? Can a study of their properties lead to a better understanding of some of the profounder aspects of our philosophy? Most important of all, may we perhaps find something here which will throw light upon that matter so close to our hearts,—the relations of Master and chêla?

The figures accompanying this article are based upon strict geometrical principles, for we have been told that "Nature is very conservative of principles," and we suspect that it was for no light reason that Pythagoras insisted

upon mathematical studies for his pupils. In the following paragraphs we have taken a few tentative steps into a difficult region, and our hope is that other and better equipped travellers may be led to extend the area of exploration.

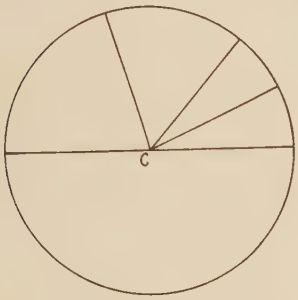

FIG. 1—THE CIRCLE
Rays emanating from the centre, C, are reflected directly back to C.

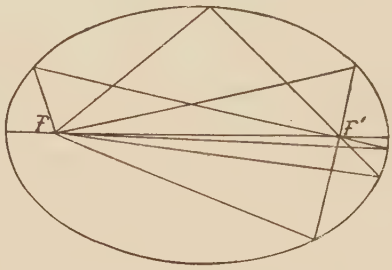

FIG. 2—THE ELLIPSE
Rays emanating from one focus, F, are reflected to the other focus, F', and from F' back to F.

Fig. 1 represents the perfect figure—the circle (or sphere). Let us think of a point of light at the centre (C) from which a multitude of rays shoot outward along the radii. If the inside of the sphere is a reflecting surface like that of a concave mirror, then every ray which departs from the centre is reflected back to the centre.

Within an ellipse, or an ellipsoid, however, such as Fig. 2, conditions are not quite so simple. This figure may be interpreted as resulting from two combined circles whose centres do not coincide. These two centres constitute the foci of the ellipse. All rays of light emanating from one focus, (F), are reflected back through the other focus, (F'), and, in consequence, at focus F', where the rays sent out from F reconverge, a glowing point is established, which in its turn becomes emanative. In fact, the very existence of the gleaming point of light at the negative focus depends upon the positive or generative pole, of which it is a perfect duplicate in every detail. It burns, however, with a lesser glow, and because of the following reason. If the ellipsoidal field were a closed system, bounded by an opaque reflector (something like an egg silvered on the inside of the shell) this would not be true, since, by the law of reflection which pertains to the ellipse, the rays would all reconverge at the negative focus; but if the peripheral film be transparent, as in a soap bubble, part of the light will be transmitted through it, and in consequence the negative focus is dimmed.

The preceding suggestions have been based upon ellipsoids of constant form and surrounded by ideal films with perfect reflective and transmittive properties. But in fact, ellipsoids vary greatly in form and film properties. When their foci are close together their form approaches that of the circle; when, on the contrary, their foci are distant from one another, they become greatly elongated loops. This is well illustrated in our own solar system, where the

orbits of the inner planets are close approximations to circles, while those of the outer planets are greatly extended ellipses.

Now what will be the effect upon the course of the light rays and upon the negative focus when the form changes? If the foci approach one another, the brilliancy of the negative focus increases till finally it unites with its positive parent and the ellipsoid becomes a sphere with a fiery point at its centre. In a sphere, as we have seen, all rays of light proceeding from the centre are reflected back to the centre. If a sun stood alone in space, its radiations would be reflected back into itself from the "boundary of space." On the other hand, if the negative pole retreats from the positive, its brilliancy fades rapidly away, while the form of the ellipse approaches the line as a limit. Actually, however, in consonance with the theory of limits, it is difficult to see how the negative focus could be "put out" till the sun "sets" and the axial ray disappears. It is evident that actual translatory motion of the negative focus is not necessarily involved in this matter. If its field of influence shrinks—if it fails to send out the energy it receives—the whole ellipse contracts, and, under the peculiar conditions of relativity which characterize the whole system, such a contraction is equivalent to repulsion or retreat.

There is also a strange blend of stability and motion in the figures. At the positive focus a perpetual emanation of energy goes on, yet at the same time the system retains a fixed form. It is the same paradoxical rest in motion which Heracleitus saw as the symbol of the universe, and it calls to mind the odd descriptive line applied by Coleridge to the glaciers of Mont Blanc:

"Motionless torrents, silent cataracts."

But in addition to this motionless motion, it seems probable that active rotation about their Central Sun is another element which characterizes the negative sparks or monads of which nature is so lavish. Perhaps this rotary motion is only a *maya* resulting from our imperfect apprehension of hyperspatial sphericities.

It is not, however, until one turns to systems of interlinked fields that their most remarkable properties begin to appear. The isolated dyad (sun-planet or proton-electron), is like a detached word in a sentence; we have to read it in its context if we are to understand its full meaning.

In the accompanying diagram (Fig. 3), six of these bodies are represented as interlinked with one another and as sharing a common positive focus from which six rays proceed outward along the axes of six ellipses. These—the normal rays of the physicist—are comparable to the valence bonds of the chemist. They are gathered up at six negative foci, in obedience to the law of reflection illustrated by Fig. 2. One may spin circles around all the foci to suggest solar, planetary or lunar bodies, or one may enclose the whole major planetary senary with a circle, to represent the sun's sphere of influence or his great invisible body of ether, inside which the planets live, move and have their being. In strict analogy, too, one may extend the system inwards as well as outwards. Then the sun itself becomes a unit in a higher stellar system, or, to use the terminology of a writer in the *Theosophical Forum*, one may trace a

regressive scheme of "prakritic, etheric, alcyonic, pranic and manasic globes." From the metaphysical standpoint, only the First Atom is self-existent, positive and originally emanative; all others are derivative and negative. It is only upon a basis of relativity that the two foci of a minor dyad can be called positive and negative.

In completing the diagram one draws the lines of six reflected rays inside each ellipse. These may also be extended outward along the paths of transmission. It is most interesting to find that the figures proceed to take matters into their own hands as the construction progresses; the majesty of mathematical law asserts itself.

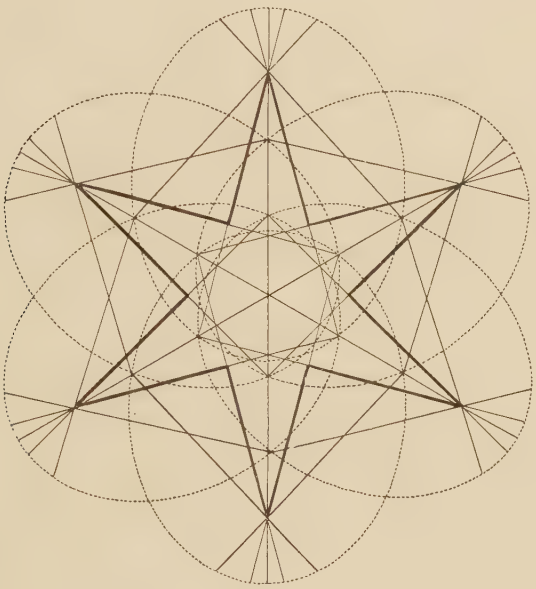

FIG. 3

Diagram of six interlinked Fields of Force—Six rays proceeding from a central positive focus are reflected from the periphery of the ellipses through the respective negative foci.

A close study of the completed diagram reveals many interesting things. It is evident that the negative foci are meant to serve as centres for new systems, and that a vast multitude of seemingly aimless lines (omitted from the drawing, so as not to complicate it unduly) are all extensions from such other systems. They doubtless enter into the formation of geometrical patterns of higher magnitude elsewhere, but similar to the beautiful six-pointed star represented here by heavier lines.

The mind balks as the imagination tries to follow the system inwards. A whirling motion of wheels within wheels; a flashing of chromatic light in kaleidoscopic richness; a blazing out into stars and other geometrical patterns —thus the halting imagination tries to picture an idealized system of interlinked fields of force possessed of the properties we have seen fit to attribute

to them. Perhaps our closest approximation to the vision is seen in the flash and sparkle of dewdrops, as the rising sun awakens the jewel fires in their hearts.

Readers of this article may find it of interest to experiment with three, four or five ellipses around a central focal point, in place of the six shown in our diagram. If such readers are familiar with the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*, they can hardly fail to be impressed by the significant figures which will be built up. Certain learned ethnologists have assured us that the familiar symbols of religion are just pretty patterns which some rude savage happened to scratch on a piece of wet clay, and which were subsequently copied by all the other rude savages forevermore. Well, science has felt obliged to "reconsider" before, and a similar salutary experience may be in store for the ethnologist. We may safely leave him to his Karma.

Let us rather consider the most important contribution which this study should have made to our own understanding. After all, our primary concern is not with magnetism or optics, or with the beauty of geometrical figures, interesting and valuable though these be. Our chief concern is to use such mental and emotional experiences to point us the way to the Masters.

If our understanding be right, we see in a diagram, such as Figure 3, a profound symbolism. Does it not represent the relation of the Logos to the six subsidiary Hierarchies of Being, or, in a sense less exalted, but to us dearer and more intimate, is it not a faithful representation of a living, central Master, bound to a group of disciples in closest intimacy? Through and from him they draw their life, while to the Divine Pattern each is conformed in his innermost being, since he receives a part of every ray which his Master transmits. In sympathetic union the chêlas unite with their Master to build up symmetrical forms of beauty. As the years pass, they are to be drawn closer to his glowing heart, until, at last, entering the flame, each may say with St. Paul: I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

To us who stand so far off in a cloud of unlikeness, the diagrams bring a challenge to listen to the voice of Lord Krishna repeating endlessly: "It matters not on what road a man approaches Me, on that road I meet him." In rainbow, in dewdrop, in snowflake and crystal, in the branching of a pine tree and the flower of a lily,—all through the world He has scattered hints of His presence so that we may find the way Home. May He give us eyes to see.

R. E. T.

BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

PART III, SECTIONS 8, 9

A GREAT INITIATE

THE teaching for disciples contained in these two sections is full of wisdom, full of dramatic force, humorous, keenly ironical. As before, the contrast is drawn between the exoteric doctrines of the Brahmans who lived in and by the ceremonial system, and the sage Yajnavalkya, the great Initiate, who possesses the secret wisdom of the Mysteries. And, as before, the disciples are set the task of discerning and divining the full depth and richness of Yajnavalkya's meaning. The figures of the dialogue are alive: Shakala's son, champion of the ceremonial Brahmans, Yajnavalkya, Master of esoteric wisdom, and the valiant daughter of Vachaknu, who appears somewhat surprisingly in this learned and contentious company. Gargi, it will be remembered, has already asked a series of questions, seeking, with her feminine symbolism of warping the loom and weaving the web, to learn on what the visible worlds are warped and woven. When she asked the same question concerning the worlds of the Eternal, Yajnavalkya reduced her to silence with the threat that such ambitious questioning would cause her head to fall off.

But Gargi comes up again, irrepressible, and this time, though it is recorded that she finally was silent, she herself had had the ultimate word. And Gargi is humorous as well as valiant; very ironical, too, in her attitude toward the ceremonial Brahmans, and not daunted by the greatness of Yajnavalkya. As a warrior-prince grasping two rival-conquering arrows, she challenges the mighty seer with her two questions, and, when the questions are answered, Gargi tells the Brahmans that they are fortunate indeed to escape from Yajnavalkya at the cost of an obeisance. Nor did all escape.

Gargi's intuitive questioning shows that, thousands of years ago, the great generalization of our new philosophers was already familiar: that Time may be correlated to Space, so that Time is described as the fourth dimension of Space, the directions of length, breadth and height being the first three dimensions. On what, asks the wise daughter of Vachaknu, are Space and Time warped and woven: that Time which people speak of as past, present, future? The answer is, that they are warped and woven on Shining Ether, on Akasha, which is not the ether of our modern physics, but a manifestation higher and more spiritual; as it were, a transparent film upon the Logos. For Space and Time are the forms of thought of the manifested Logos, the Universal Mind.

Gargi shows herself a penetrating questioner. On what, then, she asks, is Shining Ether warped and woven? Is the manifested Logos the ultimate Real? The answer is, that the Logos in turn rests on the Everlasting, the

supreme Eternal, Parabrahm. Gargi shows by her question that she already possessed an intuitive grasp of this final Truth.

Then come the closing questions, in which Vidagdha son of Shakala, as champion of the ceremonial Brahmans, challenges Yajnavalkya. He knows much and asks keenly, quickly following Yajnavalkya, step by step. He combats so vigorously for exoteric learning against esoteric wisdom, that Yajnavalkya asks him whether the Brahman priests have consigned him to destruction, to be burned to ashes.

The son of Shakala asks concerning the Bright Powers, the "gods": how many are there, and what is their true nature? Yajnavalkya answers that the many "gods" of the ceremonial worship are but the manifested powers of the One, the Logos. Then the questioning turns to the source of these powers, which, in man, appear as vision, hearing, and the whole range of energies of body and mind. Each power Yajnavalkya traces back to "the heart," that is, to spiritual consciousness; all these powers are, in the last analysis, manifestations of spiritual consciousness, which is the manifestation of the Logos.

While Yajnavalkya's answers may appear simple, they are profoundly mystical. Thus, "the son born according to the form of the father, issuing from the father's heart," is the "spiritual child" born according to the form of the divine Father, built up from the heart. The same spiritual significance is present in the answer regarding "the bright power of Soma," for this is the mystical fire of illumination, instilled by Initiation, of which Yajnavalkya so clearly speaks.

The ill-starred son of Shakala, pressing his challenging interrogation, finally asks on what "the heart," spiritual consciousness, is established. "Thou shadow of a man!" answers the fiery Initiate, "if thou thinkest it can be anywhere but in us!" We remember the words: "Within you is the light of the world."

But, for all his learning, the son of Shakala knew not the Spirit of the Secret Teaching. Therefore, says the story, his head fell off and robbers took away his bones. The commentator says that this dramatic climax is also symbolical.

Then comes the stately hymn of the tree of man's life. Man is as a tree, lord of the forest; when the tree is cut down, it springs up again from the root; but if it be uprooted, that is the end; it will not return to life.

The tree would seem to be the force that drives us into bodily life, self-perpetuating Karma. Cut down by Death, the force of thirsting desire drives us back to life with its burden of sorrows. But when the root of evil is expunged, there is no longer a forced return to bondage. Liberation in the Eternal has been attained.

Two Questioners

And so the daughter of Vachaknu said:

"O worshipful Brahmans, I shall ask him two questions; if he will tell them to me, then not one of you will ever be his conqueror in declaring the Eternal!"

"Ask, Gargi!" they said.

She said: "I, verily, O Yajnavalkya, like as a warrior prince of Kashi or Videha, stringing his unstrung bow, and grasping in his hand two rival-conquering arrows, might stand up against you, even so with my two questions have stood up against thee. Tell them to me."

"Ask, Gargi!" said he.

She said: "That, O Yajnavalkya, which is above the heavens, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth, that which these people call the past which has been, the present which is, the future which shall be: on what is that warped and woven?"

He said: "That, O Gargi, which is above the heavens, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth, that which these people call the past which has been, the present which is, the future which shall be, on shining ether is that warped and woven."

She said: "Obeisance be to thee, O Yajnavalkya, who hast declared this to me! Gird thyself for the other!"

"Ask, Gargi!" said he.

She said: "That, O Yajnavalkya, which is above the heavens, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth, that which these people call the past which has been, the present which is, the future which shall be: on what dost thou say it is warped and woven?"

He said: "That, O Gargi, which is above the heavens, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between heaven and earth, that which these people call the past which has been, the present which is, the future which shall be, I say that on shining ether it is warped and woven."

"Well then, on what is shining ether warped and woven?"

He said: "It is that, O Gargi, which knowers of the Eternal name the Everlasting. That is neither coarse nor fine, neither short nor long, neither ruddy nor smooth, without shadow, without darkness; it is not air, it is not shining ether, without attachment, without taste, or odour, or sight or sound, without speech, or thinking, without fire, without life-breath, without measure, having neither within nor without; that consumes naught, nor does aught consume that. At the command of this Everlasting, O Gargi, sun and moon stand forth separate; at the command of this Everlasting, O Gargi, heaven and earth stand forth separate; at the command of this Everlasting, O Gargi, the moments, the hours, the days and nights, the half-months, the months, the seasons, the years stand forth separate. At the command of this Everlasting, O Gargi, eastward these rivers flow from the snow-covered mountains, westward flow those, each according to his direction. At the command of this Everlasting, O Gargi, the sons of men praise those who give, the bright powers draw nigh to him who sacrifices, the spirits of the fathers draw nigh to the memorial offering.

"Whosoever, O Gargi, not knowing this Everlasting, in this world makes offerings and sacrifices and performs arduous works, even through many thousand years, that work of his is finite. Whosoever, O Gargi, not knowing

this Everlasting, from this world goes forth at death, he is miserable. And whosoever, O Gargi, knowing this Everlasting, from this world goes forth at death, he is a knower of the Eternal.

"Therefore, verily, O Gargi, this Everlasting is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the undiscerned discerner; for other than this there is no seer, other than this there is no hearer, other than this there is no thinker, other than this there is no discerner. On this Everlasting, verily, O Gargi, the shining ether is warped and woven."

She said: "O worshipful Brahmans, verily you may think it much that you escape from him by an obeisance! For not one of you will ever be his conqueror in declaring the Eternal!"

Thereupon the daughter of Vachaknu became silent.

And so Vidagdha son of Shakala asked him:

"How many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

He answered according to the form of invocation:

"As many as are named in the form of invocation of all the Bright Powers: three, and three hundred, three, and three thousand," said he.

"Yea, verily, but how many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

"Three and thirty," said he.

"Yea, verily, but how many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

"Six," said he.

"Yea, verily, but how many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

"Three," said he.

"Yea, verily, but how many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

"Two," said he.

"Yea, verily, but how many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

"One and a half," said he.

"Yea, verily, but how many are the Bright Powers, O Yajnavalkya?"

"One," said he.

"Yea, verily, but what are the three, and three hundred, three, and three thousand?" said he.

He said: "These are their manifestations of might; but three and thirty are the Bright Powers."

"Which are the three and thirty?" said he.

"Eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, make one and thirty; Indra and Prajapati make three and thirty," said he.

"What are the Vasus?" said he.

"Fire, and Earth, and Air, and Interspace, and Sun, and Sky, and Moon, and Stars. These are the Vasus, the bases, for on them is all this universe founded," said he.

"What are the Rudras?" said he.

"These ten life-breaths in the spirit of man, and Self as the eleventh. When from this body of mortality they go forth, they cause lamentation; because they cause lamentation, they are the Rudras," said he.

"What are the Adityas?" said he.

"The twelve months of the circling year; these are the Adityas, for taking this whole world they go. Because taking this whole world they go, therefore they are the Adityas," said he.

"What is Indra? What is Prajapati?" said he.

"The Lord of the thunderbolt is Indra. Sacrifice is Prajapati, Lord of beings," said he.

"What is the thunderbolt?" said he.

"Lightning," said he.

"What is sacrifice?" said he.

"The animals," said he.

"What are the six?" said he.

"Fire, and Earth, and Air, and Interspace, and Sun, and Sky. These are the six, for all this world is built of these six," said he.

"What are the three Bright Powers?" said he.

"The three worlds, for in these three worlds are all the Bright Powers," said he.

"What are the two Bright Powers?" said he.

"The Food, verily, and the Life," said he.

"What is the one and a half?" said he.

"The purifying Spirit," said he.

Then they said: "Since the purifying Spirit is as one, how is it one and a half?"

"Since in it, all wins increase, therefore it is one and a half," said he.

"What is the one Bright Power?" said he.

"Life," said he; "this is the Eternal, which they call That."

"He who should know that Spirit, of whom earth is the dwelling, fire the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is this embodied Spirit. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"The immortal," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom desire is the dwelling, the heart the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is this Spirit formed of desire. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"Women," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom forms are the dwelling, vision the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is that Spirit in the sun. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"The real," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom radiant ether is the dwelling, hearing the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, n truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is the Spirit of hearing and of the echo. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"The spaces," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom darkness is the dwelling, the heart the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is the Spirit formed of the shadow. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"Death," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom forms are the dwelling, vision the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is the Spirit in the mirror. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"The breath," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom the waters are the dwelling, the heart the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is the Spirit who is in the waters. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"Varuna," said he. "He who should know that Spirit, of whom seed is the dwelling, the heart the world, mind the light, of every Self the ultimate home, he, in truth, would be a knower, O Yajnavalkya."

"I indeed know that Spirit, of every Self the ultimate home, of whom thou speakest. It is the Spirit embodied in the son. Tell me, O son of Shakala, what is his divinity?"

"Prajapati," said he, "the Lord of beings."

"O son of Shakala," said Yajnavalkya, "have these Brahmans here consigned thee to ashes?"

"O Yajnavalkya," said the son of Shakala, "since thou hast reduced to silence these Brahmans of the Kurus and Panchalas, through knowing what Divine Power hast thou done this?"

"I know the realms of space, with their bright powers, with their foundations," said he.

"Since thou knowest the realms of space, with their bright powers, with their foundations, what bright power dost thou assign to this eastern realm?"

"The bright power of the sun," said he.

"This sun, on what bright power is it established?" said he.

"On vision," said he.

"On what is vision established?" said he.

"On forms," said he, "for through vision he perceives forms."

"Then on what are forms established?" said he.

"On the heart," said he, "for through the heart he knows forms, for in the heart are forms established."

"This is even so, O Yajnavalkya. What bright power dost thou assign to this southern realm?"

"The bright power of Yama," said he.

"This Yama, on what bright power is he established?" said he

"On the sacrifice," said he.

"Then on what is the sacrifice established?" said he.

"On the gifts of the sacrifice," said he.

"Then on what are the gifts of the sacrifice established?" said he.

"On faith," said he. "For when he has faith, he gives the gifts, for on faith are the gifts established."

"Then on what is faith established?" said he.

"On the heart," said he, "for through the heart he knows faith, for on the heart is faith established."

"This is even so, O Yajnavalkya. What bright power dost thou assign to this western realm?"

"The bright power of Varuna," said he.

"This Varuna, on what bright power is he established?" said he.

"On the waters," said he.

"Then on what are the waters established?" said he.

"On the seed," said he.

"Then on what is the seed established?" said he.

"On the heart," said he, "for when the son is born according to the form of the father, they say, 'From the heart he has issued; from the heart is he built up, as it were'. For on the heart is the seed established."

"This is even so, O Yajnavalkya. What bright power dost thou assign to this northern realm?"

"The bright power of Soma," said he.

"This Soma, on what bright power is he established?" said he.

"On Initiation," said he.

"Then on what is Initiation established?" said he.

"On the Real," said he, "for to the Initiate they say, 'Speak the Real, speak Truth!' " said he.

"Then on what is Truth established?" said he.

"On the heart," said he, "for through the heart he knows the Real, the Truth, for on the heart is Truth established," said he.

"This is even so, O Yajnavalkya. What bright power dost thou assign to that fixed realm above?"

"The bright power of the Fire-lord," said he.

"This Fire-lord, on what bright power is he established?" said he.

"On the Voice," said he.

"Then on what is the Voice established?" said he.

"On the heart," said he.

"Then on what is the heart established?" said he.

"Thou shadow of a man!" said Yajnavalkya, "If thou thinkest that it can

be anywhere but in us! For if it were anywhere but in us, then dogs might eat it, or birds of prey tear it to pieces!"

"Then in what art thou and the Self established?" said he.

"In the Life," said he.

"Then in what is the Life established?" said he.

"In the downward-life," said he.

"Then in what is the downward-life established?" said he.

"In the distributive-life," said he.

"Then in what is the distributive-life established?" said he.

"In the upward-life," said he.

"Then in what is the upward-life established?" said he.

"In the uniting-life," said he. "This is that divine Self, of which they say, 'It is not that, not that!' It is incomprehensible, for it is not comprehended. It is indestructible, for it is not destroyed. It is beyond attachment, for it is not attached. It is unbound. It trembles not. It is invulnerable. These are the eight dwellings, the eight worlds, the eight bright powers, the eight Spirits. He who discerns these eight Spirits, and, uniting them, transcends them, He is the Spirit of the Secret Teaching, concerning Whom I question thee. If thou shalt not declare Him to me, thy head will fall off!"

But the son of Shakala did not know Him, therefore his head fell off. Also robbers carried off his bones, thinking they were something of value.

And so he said: "Worshipful Brahmans, whichever of you desires, let him question me. Or do ye all question me. Or whichever of you desires, him among you will I question. Or I shall question you all."

But those Brahmans dared not.

Then he questioned them through these verses:

"As is a tree, lord of the forest, such of a surety also is man.
His hairs are the leaves, his skin is the bark without.
From his skin the red blood flows, as sap from the bark.
From him pierced a stream comes forth, as from the stricken tree.
His flesh is the outer wood, as sinews the fibres are firm.
His bones are the inner wood, his marrow is formed as the pith.
As the tree, hewn down, springs up again, renewed once more from the root;
The mortal, hewn down by Death, from what root does he grow up?
Say not, 'from the seed!' for that proceeds from the living man;
As the tree, springing from seed, comes forth visibly into being.
But if the tree were uprooted, it would not thus return to life.
The mortal, hewn down by Death, from what root does he grow up?
When born indeed, he is not born again, for who would cause him to be born?
Wisdom, bliss, is the Eternal, ultimate home of the giver of gifts, and of him who stands, knowing That."

C. J.

WHY I JOINED THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

WHY, or how, I joined the Theosophical Society, I have not the ghost of a notion. I cannot guess, even, whether my ignorance is of the why of it or of the how of it. I think that it may be of both, perhaps. But I do entertain the suspicion that in some way the matter was, let me say, arranged. And moreover, although I may choose outwardly to regard it as a suspicion, I am compelled inwardly to regard it as a conviction.

I came upon a book, an oldish book. It interested me in a way all its own. I fear that I am easily won to any well presented cause, and again as easily won over to the cause of its opponents when it, in its turn, is more or less equally well presented. But the incident of the reading of that book was an exception. I acquired, as I read it, an abiding faith in its truth.

At that time, I think, I did not realize that anything was being arranged. One would do well to recognize—let alone identify—a whole series in a single one of its terms isolated from the procession.

Well, a little later I came upon the fellow of that first book. I think, although now I am not certain of it, that just about then I began to suspect the existence of the possibility that something was being arranged. The reading of the second book fortified and augmented the faith engendered on the reading of the first.

Thereupon, at any rate, I was led—I am sure that I was led—to visit the periodical room of a library. Ordinarily I do not visit libraries at all. On that occasion I set out with only the vaguest of plans, thinking merely that I might stumble upon some current printed matter relating to the subject which the reading of the books had discovered to me. And I did stumble upon that very thing—the QUARTERLY.

Why was the QUARTERLY there, where I was? Why was I there, where the QUARTERLY was? Why was the library's copy of the QUARTERLY not otherwise in use at that very moment? Why, most of all, did I not stumble—instead—over one of several other magazines, any one of which would have brought the incident—or train of incidents—to an unsatisfactory yet nonetheless definite end? My faith increased.

Of course it did. Strange at first acquaintance as the QUARTERLY is bound to be, the strangest thing about it—to me—is this: it all reads true, indisputably and of itself true.

I can imagine myself unconsciously seeking something. What it is, I do not know; how to find it, I do not know. Then at one and the same time there are revealed to me both the thing itself in the distance, and the path at my feet

which I may take to find it. It is the thing, because there lies the path; it is the path, because there stands the thing. . . . It is a little like that.

Incidentally, from the outset of my experience I have believed the excellence of the QUARTERLY to be a thing "arranged."

But to return to the story,—naturally enough, then, I wrote for further information. At about that time, I think, I was fully conscious of being led, and very well pleased too. All that I had to do was to coast along through one adventure after another,—several letters, some more reading, an interview, another interview, admission to membership, Convention. And great adventures they were,—each bearing witness to the reality of its predecessors and to the splendour of those to come.

Most gratefully do I remember two bits of advice: one, to endeavour to answer my own questions myself; the other, to read theosophical matter slowly enough to understand it—"a year to a sentence", if necessary. Nor shall I forget a remark made with reference to election to the Executive Committee, characterizing it as "the greatest honour that could be bestowed".

There my story might end. But I should like, first, to confess my debt to Theosophy. I cannot do so in theosophical phraseology, for I have learned much too little for that. I am learning, however, not so much to answer my own questions myself as to ask them myself, and to answer them—if need be—by asking further questions. I am learning, very slowly but I hope very surely, to be tolerant of what is right in others and intolerant of what is wrong in me. I am beginning to understand the importance of the real and the unimportance of the unreal, and my system of questions and answers is enabling me to distinguish real and unreal, false and true. I am learning how to be happy.

X. Y

Joy and happiness are indeed good things, but they must be sought where they are.—ST. AUGUSTINE.

ON THE SCREEN OF TIME

"THE world, for worldly reasons, has entered into a conspiracy of silence, which it breaks only to utter syrupy platitudes about Peace. It is necessary once more, I think, that the truth be spoken; and the THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY is the only place I know where any truth is welcome."

The Historian paused; but as obviously we waited for him to proceed, he took from his pocket a newspaper cutting, which, he explained, gave a despatch from Berlin, dated January 30th. Herr Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister, had addressed the Reichstag, declaring that France must evacuate the Rhineland. Her excuse for occupying it, he said, was "security against Germany"; but "the time has come at last to point out that there is a certain amount of hypocrisy in the demand for security against Germany, which can no longer be endured by the public opinion of the world."

"And why is it," the Historian exclaimed, "that 'the public opinion of the world,' for which Herr Stresemann so strangely feels entitled to speak, can no longer endure the French demand for security against Germany! Listen to his reply: it is because 'I have never yet seen a formula which assures peace between two neighbouring countries more efficaciously than the Locarno agreement assures it between Germany and France. Both nations obligate themselves through this agreement to forego all aggressive action against each other. Whosoever asks for more security than that, doubts the pledged word and the signed treaty.'"

This was too much. One or two of us laughed; one or two of us nearly swore; all of us showed signs of exasperation. We had read that news item when it appeared, but the reminder of it seemed to make it worse.

"Is he deliberate, or is he morally embryonic?" the Student protested.

"I do not know," the Historian replied. "He may realize his impertinence, —by which I mean that he may deliberately be showing his contempt for the world's childish forgetfulness; or he may be so *dumm* as to see no connection between his talk about 'the pledged word and the signed treaty,' and 'the scrap of paper,' which, as all of us must remember, was the way in which Germany characterized and treated her solemn undertaking to respect and defend the neutrality of Belgium.

"In either case, his challenge should be met squarely. He should be told—though it be in the pages of the QUARTERLY only—that if France does not ask for more security than that provided by Germany's 'pledged word' and 'signed treaty,' France will deserve her fate. Germany does not even pretend to have repented. The whole course of history, for a thousand years or more, means that she will invade France again, on some pretext or other, just as soon as she thinks she can do so with a good chance of success. There is no such proof of immaturity and of lack of character, as to forget easily, and those who forget

Germany's record—of which all of us were reminded during the war—show themselves mentally incompetent, emotionally unbalanced, or 'born too soon in human shape.' France will never be safe from invasion unless she lives armed to the teeth. It is what any sensible man would do if he knew his neighbour were a bandit, and if he could neither have him permanently locked up, nor felt justified in shooting him at sight. It would be a nerve-racking life, but I suppose one would grow used to it; and, granted that it might prove inexpedient to take the aggressive, the only alternative would be eternal vigilance and a good supply of sawn-off shot guns and ammunition."

The Historian looked as if he would like to have the bandit at the other end of his shot gun,—so much so, that we charged him with it. "Perhaps," he admitted; "but, in terms of disgust, I think I am more disgusted with myself than with the bandit. Germany is proclaiming at the top of her voice, with endless iteration, that she was not responsible for the war, and that she is being treated most unjustly. Repeat something often enough—almost anything—and loudly enough,—and there is not one man in a million who will not accept it as true, that is, unless he has reason to resist the suggestion consciously, and even then, it may leave some doubt in his mind. So far as Germany is concerned, I really believe I am immune; but the thing that disgusts me with myself is the realization that if I see and hear often enough, 'Smith's Biscuits are Best,' or 'The Whole World knows that Winston's Wool is Wonderful,'—I shall be insidiously undermined, and some day, more than half ashamed of myself, I shall order some, just to find out what 'the best' is like! And although that would not greatly matter, what does matter is that in a thousand different ways we are influenced—usually unbeknown to ourselves—by the clamour of the world around us, shouting its false standards and insane habits, through the press and on the streets and, worse than that, through members of our own family whom Theosophy has not reached. Talk about psychism! Is one of us free from it! No worse mistake can be made than to suppose that we are, merely because we do not see colours and hear whistles—no, I mean bells—and smell sulphur and revel in 'thrills,' whenever we begin to 'meditate.' The vast majority of people never leave the astral plane from the moment of birth until they die,—when, for a second or two, they may come closer to reality. For the rest of the time they're drunk; in their youth, roaring; in their 'prime,' 'carrying it'; in old age, sodden. Think you're entirely free from it, and you're lost. No one is, short of an Adept. Another way of putting it is that no man on earth is such a bore as the man who thinks himself entirely sane. We. . ."

"For pity's sake!" the Student interrupted, laughing. "What do you suppose the readers of the QUARTERLY will think of us? And what on earth has all this to do with Germany?"

"I am concerned primarily with what the readers of the QUARTERLY think about themselves," the Historian answered; "and as to Germany, the connection is direct, because, of all nations, Germany is the most psychic."

"I agree with nearly everything you have exclaimed," the Philosopher now remarked, choosing his words with suspicious care; "but I am tempted to read

to you something that Rama Krishna is reported to have said to Keshub Chunder Sen, when Keshub was leader of the Brahmo-Samaj."

"What was it?" the Historian asked.

"'Men think that to criticize is to give life,'" read the Philosopher. "Criticism creates nothing. 'To create is to be like God. . . . When a selfless person lives amongst us his deeds become the very heart-beat of virtue. The being of such a one hovers over the world on wings of benediction. He becomes the chalice of holiness. . . . That is what I expect you to do, Keshub. You have that power; will you use it? Or shall you squander this life-time by abusing people? Shall men say that Keshub spent his days in the tavern of talk, drinking the wine of eloquence? On the contrary, may you *be* so that they will say, "He dwelt amongst us like a tiger of truth. Wherever he went, errors trembled like leaves in the jungle, and sin fled before him like a herd of goats. He was so full of blessings that even his feeblest gestures showered love on all. His words were immortalities. He did not humble us with criticisms; for he heightened us with God."'"

"That is one side of the picture," the Historian answered, nothing daunted; "but there is another. In the first place allow me to point out that Rama Krishna was advising Keshub; he was not advising me. Secondly, he was criticizing Keshub severely, while advising him not to criticize others,—which suggests that criticism may be the function of some people and not of others. Thirdly, Rama Krishna was talking in the language of Keshub, who was a Brahmo, or Unitarian; and therefore, perhaps *par politesse*, chose to ignore the more orthodox, and, I venture to think, the more rational Trinitarian view of God, as Brahma, Vishnu, Sîva. God creates, but God is equally active as Conserver and Destroyer. In what I said I was attempting to assist the Deity in that last most important function,—not fruitlessly, I trust."

The Philosopher was delighted. "Well," he said, "I suspect your theology is impeccable . . . you have read the book, I imagine?"

"No. What is it?"

"*The Face of Silence*, by Dhan Gopal Mukerji. I enjoyed it immensely; but it needs to be read with more detachment than most people possess."

"Perhaps also with some slight knowledge of Hindu theology," the Historian suggested slyly.

"Exactly! With that added, I do not see how the story of Rama Krishna can fail to stimulate the efforts of any sincere student of Theosophy."

"Tell us about it," several of us asked.

"Better read it for yourselves. The author is inclined to see things *couleur de rose*,—a tendency which I greatly prefer to its opposite, but which means that he needs to be discounted in some respects. I imagine that he has 'the artistic temperament,' with intense sympathies, not often long-lived. His gift of expression is remarkable. Not content with painting Rama Krishna, to the best of his ability, as a demi-god—and Rama Krishna was an extraordinary man—he sees his hero's disciples through the same haze of glory, and although this may not be misleading in the case of Turyananda, about whom

I know nothing except that which the author himself relates, I suspect that Vivekananda, now dead, had limitations which the author either does not know or does not understand. For instance, he quotes Turyananda as disapproving of Pranayama and of Hatha Yoga in general; but Vivekananda, lecturing in this country, taught that Pranayama—which he defined as 'controlling the breathing'—should be practised in order to control the mind. 'Breath,' he said, 'is like the fly-wheel of this machine.' 'To get the subtle perception we have to begin with the grosser perceptions, so we have to get hold of that which is setting the whole engine in motion, and that is the Prana, the most obvious manifestation of which is the breath.' I am quoting from his published lectures, first printed in 1897. Needless to say that his teaching in this fundamental respect was the opposite of the truth as taught by H. P. B. and Judge, both of whom would have said that Vivekananda was putting the cart before the horse, and that it is the mind, not the Prana, which is like the fly-wheel of the machine.

"There are other things in the book which aroused disapproval as I read it; but for the most part it is admirable."

"I shall never have time to read it," said the Engineer. "If you won't tell us about it at length, at least give us the substance of its doctrine."

"The Tired Business Man wants the formula in the style of a newspaper heading!" the Philosopher retorted mockingly. "I refuse; but I will read you one or two extracts, if you like."

"Before you do so," interjected the Ancient, "may I be allowed to add something to what was said about criticism? I find myself unwilling to leave that subject without further comment. Simply this: it is undoubtedly the duty of parents, teachers, employers and others to criticize; their fitness to do so, however, may be gauged to some extent by their disinclination, for those who criticize without conscious effort and sacrifice, probably are assuming a function which is not theirs, or, in any case, should suspect themselves of having permitted their motive to become tainted with personal feeling. That is all. . . . Perhaps the Philosopher will now be so good as to read to us."

The Philosopher opened his book. "Its outstanding thought," he said, "is the need to eliminate self. A rich Hindu, orthodox and very charitable, had been assured by his priests that he would go to Heaven. He consulted Rama Krishna, who said to him—speaking of the three ways of approach: 'Knowledge, deeds and love,—each one of them has to be selfless in order to find the Self of God.' Still the man questioned. 'But how is one to be free of desire to that high degree?' Came the answer: 'Stop listening to the flattery of the priests. Do not for a moment think that your deeds are going to do anybody any good. Begin at the beginning. Purify your deeds of any taint of self by purifying your thoughts. . . . Pray and meditate. Only undertake those actions that fall within the limits of your purified thoughts and dreams. Eschew any action that is tainted in the slightest by self. Give up building hospitals, houses for the helpless and other charitable institutions. Seek not to flatter yourself with gigantic deeds. *Undertake duties as small in size as your*

self-surrender to God. Then as your selflessness and purity grow—and things of the Soul grow very fast—it will pierce its own way through the material world and benefit others as the Ganges sprang through the hard rocks of the Himalayas and watered thousands of miles with her beneficence. . . . The true God includes all. There is only one thing that He excludes, and that is desire for results whether here on earth or in Heaven. Renounce all earthly results; give up even the hope of the felicity of Heaven, Swarga.' This was too much,—the work of a lifetime disappearing before his eyes! So Rama Krishna explained: 'If you defeat your soul's end by doing good deeds with earthly results in view, you will do it endless harm if you act in order to be rewarded hereafter. Selflessness is not only the road out of earthliness, but also out of Heaven. Does God abide in one and only one place? No. He cannot be chained either to Heaven or to earth. And if you fasten your soul's claws on Him, you will have to give up the selfish joys of Paradise too.'"

"Surely that is strange doctrine," our Visitor protested, evidently much bewildered. "Christ sits at the right hand of God, in Paradise."

"Why place the right hand of God in Paradise?" asked the Philosopher. "Also, what do you mean by 'Paradise'? Rama Krishna meant the state or states of consciousness which Madame Blavatsky, using a Tibetan term, described as Devachan. He did not mean a high spiritual condition. Apart from that, however, you go further than the Creed, which says that 'he ascended into heaven,' but which does not say that he stayed there! If you identify Christ with the Logos, to the exclusion of his humanity, it would be necessary to think of him as remaining continually on the plane of the Logos, not only now, but both before and during his incarnation as Jesus. Think of him, on the other hand, as divinely perfected man, as he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, and the truth is that instead of being in Paradise, the veil between us and him is so thin that he can remove it at any moment,—just as he did then. The result of your attitude, so far as you are concerned, is to exile him from earth. In any case, Rama Krishna's doctrine, on this subject, is in accord with that of esoteric Christianity, even if the various orthodoxies should see fit to dispute it. Let me conclude my quotation. No true mystic of any creed would deny this: 'When your self is all burnt up, and God has taken possession of you completely, then every act of your life will be immortal. Whether you seek Jnana Yoga, realization through knowledge, or Karma Yoga, realization through deeds, you have to have a dire longing for God at its foundation. Without that foundation the house of knowledge is a perpetual labyrinth of deception, and the temple of deeds is but the tabernacle of self-adulation. Therefore go to-night: lift yourself like an offering to the Self of the Universe. With that act of surrender you will begin to build the palace of immortal acts. With those hands of yours doomed to death you shall erect the citadel of deathlessness.'"

"I like that," said the Historian, "except that if the rich Hindu had taken Rama Krishna's advice literally, and had tried to offer himself 'to the Self of the Universe,' he would have been offering himself to a cloud. He prob-

ably avoided that error by offering himself mentally to Rama Krishna. No man can jump from the level of personal consciousness to the Self of the Universe, which, from that level, can be conceived of only as a void or an abstraction. If he be fortunate enough to know of some Master, and can reach up to the dust under his Master's feet, he will be nearer to the Self of the Universe than by any amount of direct approach. He will never find that dust, however, in any true sense, until he has learned to honour and obey his own conscience, and those who are his immediate superiors in the hierarchy of being. . . . I think the most important thing you have read to us so far is the advice to 'begin at the beginning.' There are too many who want to begin at the end, and who, in their imaginations, do so with scintillating success. Incapable as yet of discriminating between a desire and a duty; thoroughly dishonest with themselves whenever their desire is involved; always persuading themselves that of course their Master would approve of the course they want to follow,—they bask in their own emotions about him, as if these were the pure radiance of his spirit. . . . But please read some more."

"The book covers a much wider field than my quotations suggest, but I want to concentrate on the one point because of its importance. The author gives conversations with Turyananda, in which the latter is reported to have said: 'The man of action, if he eschews all the material reward of his acts here or hereafter, will find God in no time. A mystic who meditates and prays without any desire for acquiring power, he too will find the All-Powerful in a short time. And he, who loves God's creatures, finds Him the instant his love is not caused by a motive, nor held by an earthly end. Here in the house of name and form there is room for all. It is the market place of the Infinite ['Each name and each form that is, exists in order to articulate God.'] . . . In Kali Yuga, this age, the only thing they have to do is to go on wanting the Lord sincerely. If they want Him long, He will reveal Himself to their mortal eyes. There is no doubt of it. He is like the mother-cat who cannot resist the crying call of her kitten very long.' Yet to turn once more to Rama Krishna: 'The way most people act, to know and love God is a scandal. They think He is hungrier than a common beggar at their door, easy to satisfy with a handful of any kind of offering. Oh, no; He cannot be fooled by little sacrifices when desire for earthly results stalks through men's thoughts and dreams like herds of elephants through a jungle. And do you think you can satisfy God by presenting Him with a fraction of yourself? He, being Infinite, will not accept anything but the infinite in you.'"

There was a pause. Then, abruptly:

"Sometimes I think that what The Theosophical Society needs is a rule, or an agreement, that no member shall talk about the Society, or about Theosophy, or about a fellow member, for a full year!" It was the Historian again. Our laughter interrupted him. "Why so savage?" someone asked. But another, outdoing the Historian, added: "How many would be left at the end of the year? No QUARTERLY, no meetings,—Silence!"

"The survivors might be new creatures. As it is, someone snatches at the

idea of selflessness—as old as the hills, but presented freshly—revolves it once or twice in his mind, so as to enjoy its flavour; bolts with it as a panacea for a friend; telephones about it—for fear of being second in the field—to another friend; recommends it to his cook,—and then flies off in search of another idea, to be treated similarly."

"Yes," said the Ancient quietly; "the Masters must find us an awful trial. It is bad enough to have to live with oneself for sixty years or longer; but they have to follow our asininities throughout the Manvantara. People talk about their crosses; but as we grow older we discover that we have only one, the terrible cross of the personal self, to which we cling, none the less, as if our existence depended upon it. Some day we must learn to accept that too, and to be thankful for it. After all, its conquest and transformation constitute our present opportunity."

"Was not that the subject of a recent discussion at the New York Branch?" the Student asked. "I was away on business, and should much like to hear about it."

"I happen to have the transcript of some stenographic notes of the opening address, if you would care to see it," one of our editors offered; but he was asked to read it aloud, and did so, as follows:

"I know it is not customary to begin these talks with a text, but that is what I am going to do this evening. The text is: 'He seeketh liberty, which is so dear, as knoweth he who life for her refuses,'—Longfellow's translation of some lines from the first Canto of the 'Purgatorio.' Virgil and Dante have ascended from hell—you remember how—and once more they behold the stars. Then they pass on to the mountain of purification, to Purgatory, and there they find Cato, as guardian,—Cato of all people, not a Christian, be it noted, but a heathen, and none the less in command of Purgatory. The reason that Dante places Cato in that position is that Cato took his own life rather than become a prisoner,—at least that was one of the reasons. Cato questions them, seeing that one of them is a living man,—not of the dead; and it is then that Virgil, answering Cato, says of Dante, his companion, 'He seeketh liberty, which is so dear, as knoweth he who life for her refuses'; or, in the translation of Carey, 'In the search of liberty he journeys; that how dear, they know who for her sake have life refused.'

"Then you will remember that Cato allows them to pass, insisting, however, that Dante's face must first be washed, and that he must carry with him one of the reeds growing by the shore of the sea,—a reed, symbol of humility; a reed, as he explains, because no flower or tree that stiffens in its bark can bend beneath the turbulence of the sea's waves and the waves of life.

"Liberty: and liberty, I suggest, should be the subject of our discussion this evening, because it is the culmination of what we have been considering at earlier meetings, which was, the purpose of life. What is the purpose of life, it was asked; and we were reminded of Emerson's statement that the universe exists for the purposes of soul. It was suggested that life, instead of being for enjoyment, is really for education, that we may learn to understand ourselves,

and the universe,—its meaning, and the things in it. Yet, however we answer that question, we should remember that actually, no matter how learned our answer may seem to be, it is merely, at best, an approximation to the truth; because, until we attain the ability to look at a thing from above, we cannot possibly understand it. For instance, a boy at school may be told the purpose of education, and may repeat accurately something he has heard his father or his teacher tell him; but we all know that that boy cannot really understand the purpose of education until he looks back from the vantage point of another twenty or thirty years, in the light of experience—in that sense from above—and sees for himself what he has gained, or what he might have gained, and what he has lost. Further, so long as we attempt to interpret the universe in terms of the mind, we must of necessity fall short of the truth; while no answer can have much meaning for us without the background of the theosophical philosophy. Consequently, at previous meetings, we have considered the method of growth,—how it is that things evolve, and whether the method indicates a purpose. We have considered the method as applying to the universe as a whole, and therefore as applying to atoms and to all else in the universe. We have considered those great periods of evolution and involution, of expansion and contraction, which is the way of growth that has always been taught in the East, where they speak of the days and nights of Brahma,—a doctrine which has been echoed by many western philosophers, Herbert Spencer among them. The purpose of evolution followed by the purpose of involution; summer time followed by winter; day time followed by night time. Expressed in other words, it is the descent of spirit into matter for the redemption of matter, thus manifesting the divine nature in and through matter, and in order that spirit itself may acquire self-consciousness: another mental effort to explain the way of growth, of the universe, and of everything in it, based upon the assumption that time and space are realities, and that causality is a reality. We must assume those things, if we are going to speak in terms of the mind.

"In the process of growth, as spirit descends into matter, as unity ceases to be unity and becomes diversity, before diversity returns again to unity,—spirit, in order to come into contact with matter on different planes, evolves an organ of contact, just as a human being or an animal, as the result of desire, evolves an organ of sight, by means of which it can see; or an ear, by means of which it can respond to, and learn from, the world of sound. You will keep in mind, please, Lamarck's suggestion or theory, that just as desire precedes function, so function precedes organism. That is of vital importance, if we would understand the laws of growth. It has direct bearing, not only on the physical universe around us, but on the growth of the soul itself,—upon our daily growth. So we have, as I say, the spirit throwing up or evolving an organ, an instrument of contact, by means of which it may perceive the plane upon which, at that time, it is functioning. I repeat that the same process is followed there as in the evolution of any physical organ of the human or any other body,—the eye, for instance, being an organ which was evolved as the result of desire

to see. Now suppose that the eye developed the illusion that it was 'the person.' The eye, theoretically, cannot see backwards or upwards. It cannot see the creature whose instrument it is. It projects slightly beyond the surface of the body. That eye has a perfect right, from one standpoint, to think of itself as 'it', or as 'I', and perhaps to complain in its own mind of this great big lump that it has to drag around with it. It sounds absurd. It would sound even more absurd if the eye were to begin to think not only that it was 'it', but that it had a right, on its own account, to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As a matter of fact, that is exactly what the larger organ evolved by the soul has done. The organ evolved by the soul is that which we call the personality, and the personality, which really is the result of an interaction between spirit and matter, instead of realizing that it is just an organ of perception, has come to the conclusion that it is 'it,' and talks about *my* soul and *my* spirit, if it happens to believe in such things.

"Of course, because servants have a way of imitating their masters, as soon as the personality adopts that attitude and becomes imbued with the notion that it is an independent entity, the various organs in the body imitate the thing that ought to be their master, and begin to think that they are 'it', that they have a right to independence, and to various other things. The result is chaos, the kind of chaos, physiologically speaking, in which most people live. You probably know some man, whose liver for instance, quite obviously controls him. Various other organs control different people; they are in a state of rebellion, just as the personality is in a state of chronic rebellion. The personality does not know it; does not think it: it is so convinced that it is the real thing and the centre of its universe, that it has forgotten, if it ever knew, that it is in a state of rebellion. It has taken to itself and into itself, as the result of the interaction between spirit and matter, the 'I-ness' which belongs to the soul alone.

"That was the situation many thousands of years ago, which confronted the great Lodge of Masters, those who, in a previous period of manifestation, a previous Manvantara, had attained to realization, had discovered that the personality is not the self; who had attained to freedom from that illusion, and who therefore acted, as the new day of being began, as the fathers, as the guides, as the kings of this new race of children. That was the problem that confronted them. Here was a race of creatures in a state of rebellion, as the result of assuming that the personality was the real self, as the result of taking and using the powers of the spirit for personal ends. We can imagine that the Masters conferred among themselves as to what could be done to rescue these infants from perdition, to make them realize the truth.

"It is important that that problem of the Masters should be considered and, in so far as we are capable of it, understood; otherwise, we shall never get the slightest idea of what the great religions of the world are about. Let us use an analogy: think of a small boy who steals. Some people who have never come into contact with small boys might imagine that it would be a perfectly simple thing to cure him; just say, 'Johnny, don't steal,' and the thing is done. Those,

however, who have some slight acquaintance with the species know that it is not so simple, and that they may have to try every method imaginable, using the appeal of reason, of love, of shame and mortification, punishment and reward, —every imaginable device to wake that boy up, to make him aware of what he is doing, to bring him to consciousness and to self-consciousness in that respect. They may succeed, and they may fail; my point is that they have to try one method after another. If one fails, try another. Also, it should be perfectly obvious that no two boys are alike. One method may succeed with one and fail with another.

"It is often said of the great religions of the world, that they do not teach the same thing. Superficially, they do not; but suppose two mothers or fathers to be addressing two different boys: perhaps the boys will think, They are saying different things; it must be some kind of 'bluff'! We, who know better, can reconcile *that* kind of contradiction easily; and in exactly the same way, once we understand the purpose of religions, we shall be able to reconcile supposed contradictions between them.

"Once more, what was the problem? Men lost in blindness, men convinced that they had a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, men convinced that they—that is to say, the personali y, instead of being a mere organ of perception, designed merely as a means of contact with the physical and mental world, through which the spirit might gain experience and understanding—convinced that that instrument was the real self. It would seem absurd to anyone to suggest that the eye has any function whatsoever, or any right, except to obey. No physical organ can have any right to go off on a kind of 'spree' on its own account. Nor would it worry you if your eye were to feel bored or unhappy. Yet, while fully admitting that, how many believe, and how many act on the belief, that exactly the same thing is true of the personality; that its sole function is to obey; that its happiness or unhappiness has nothing to do with it?

"The Masters knew that just as rebellious organs in the human body spell misery both for the organ and for the person who ought to be its ruler, so these personalities were miserable—though everlastingly alternating between misery and silly intoxication—and they wanted to rescue the personalities from that misery, and above all, the souls that were the prisoners of those personalities,—because the soul is a prisoner; if all the organs in a man's body are in a state of rebellion, is he not the prisoner of those organs?

"A tremendous problem: how to give these creatures liberty, when they did not know enough even to want liberty. Dante had reached the point, having passed through hell, when he longed for liberty; but how many of us really want it, really want to be liberated from these personalities which have us by the throat? Some of us may think, Yes, that is exactly what we want. But if we wanted it completely, we should have it in three seconds. It is because we are houses divided against ourselves that still we are slaves.

"There is the problem that confronted the Masters of Wisdom—that still confronts them; and first one came and then another came, and tried this

method of presentation and then another. In the course of the winter, I hope we shall consider in detail the different methods or efforts of different Masters to liberate mankind, to free them from the clutches of self, from the blindness in which men are lost, from this supreme illusion of a selfhood that does not exist.

"Anyone who has read the *Gîta* must see that it consists, or concludes with, a synthesis of different methods by which freedom can be attained, after presenting first one, then another; and that it shows how these all point to the same attainment, that is, to freedom, if you will follow any of these methods faithfully. Then came Gautama Buddha, with the background of the *Gîta* and the Upanishads. Perhaps as the result of observation, the Lodge of Masters had found that many of those who followed the advice of the *Gîta* had given it that queer twist that you can give any kind of religious instruction, and had longed for freedom that they might get away from the world and have a little peace; had carried self with them and had never got away from it but had perhaps merely increased the sense of self. Buddha tried a slightly different method: pointing out the miseries of life resulting from the desire for life; teaching the noble eightfold path; instructing his disciples to think of all living creatures, north, south, east and west, and to go out to them with hearts of love, so as to lift themselves out of this little self in which they were immersed;—the *Gîta*, pointing upwards to the great Self; Buddha, almost in despair, pointing not upwards to the great Self, but to the pity of life as manifested, especially as lived by men. You may remember that just before he attained to Buddhahood, under the Bodhi tree, he said, I have found the Truth, but what is the use of telling anybody else about it—it is sheer waste of time; and then great Brahma himself pleaded with him and said, Try once more, you may succeed with some of them. Finally, he consented, and because of this supreme sacrifice, from being a Bodhisattva, became the perfect Buddha.

"Then the great Master Christ: other religious teachers had tried to use sorrow and suffering as means to persuade men from the illusion of personal life, pointing out that birth was pain, that life was pain, that death was pain, and saying, in effect: turn from it because you can attain unto peace—*turn* from it. Christ tried a different method. He said: *Grasp* it, and use it for victory—and of course, *did* as he preached. He took pain and used it for the triumph of love, used it to make himself free, that all mankind might become free, if they would only follow the method he had revealed to them, not only in his life but in many of his sayings, such as, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself . . . for whosoever will save his life shall lose it.' *The Imitation of Christ* is an elaboration of the same theme; instruction on how to grasp the cross that we may gain freedom. We certainly need that instruction to-day, though few want it. Most people are like those who have lived so long in prison that they would feel lost if released from it.

"I wonder whether this doctrine of release, as it might be called, amounts to a conviction in many of us, or whether it meets with a mere intellectual assent, or perhaps with some degree of skepticism. Sometimes I think that if one

really knew it with the whole of one's being, one would only have to say it, and everyone else would realize that it is true. Yet, as against that, is the fact that great Masters have said it—the greatest among the Masters—and with what result? Some have listened. Some have responded. Buddha said it, and there were those who, merely by hearing the words he uttered, knew that it was so, and gained liberation in that moment. Christ said it in another language, to another race—a very different race—and I doubt if many gained liberation, while we know how crudely he has been misunderstood by the world as a whole, from that day to this. We know the extent to which orthodox religion, instead of helping people to get rid of their sense of personality, simply increases it in many cases. Think of a man, eminently virtuous, who gives most of his money in charity,—the world would say, a devout man: but why is he doing it? Is he doing it for pure love of Christ, absolutely regardless of himself, with no thought of heaven or hell or his own future, purely for love's sake? Or is he doing it because he has a kindly disposition, believes it is the right thing to do, hopes to go to heaven, hopes to please Christ,—so Christ may be pleased with him, so he may get his reward. Does he in any way whatsoever get rid of the illusion that *he* personally is doing these things, that *he* personally is giving away large sums of money, that *he* is being kind? Very often, he is simply intensifying his sense of I-ness in that personality. He is above criticism. Nobody can find fault with him.

"Prayer—Christian prayer—is very often harmful in that way. I am not saying for one moment that all people who use Christian prayer increase their sense of personal identity by so doing; but too often that is the case: they make it merely an extension of egotism—I-this, I-that, beating against the walls of heaven. Liberation? No thought of liberation in it anywhere; no conception that there is any need for liberation. A perfectly respectable personality is doing the praying. Yet Christ came to earth to liberate mankind, and for no other purpose; to rid them of this night-mare of self which possesses them so intensely that they never let go of it, morning, noon or night. Is that what he wants as reward for his sacrifice,—that kind of perpetual egotistical praying with the personal self as centre and as end?

"So, for your consideration and discussion, we would suggest to you that the end of all religions, and the chief purpose of Theosophy, is to help people, first of all to realize the need for liberation, and then to suggest ways by which freedom can be attained—freedom from illusion, freedom from the bonds of self—so that we may come to understand who and what we really are; not the personality but the spirit; and so that the spirit, having attained to self-consciousness, may become a real individuality in the spiritual world. But that individual in the spiritual world can never be evolved, can never become, so long as the personality takes to itself all sense of individuality, all sense of I-ness, and misuses for its own ends that which is part of the divine nature."

"That is the end of the address. At the next meeting of the Branch, Professor Mitchell opened with a talk which he has since elaborated in the form of an article entitled 'Practical Aspects of Consciousness,' which is to appear in this

(April) issue of the QUARTERLY,—packed full of suggestions for thought and meditation."

"I suppose," said our Visitor (he must have seen the point), "that what you have read to us about the personality being merely an organ or instrument, whose only proper function is to obey, is an explanation of the tremendous emphasis which all ascetics have laid on the need to conquer self-will. I remember a statement by Saint Bernard, that when we suffer from hunger or cold, or from any other inconvenience, it is only the self-will in us that suffers; and that we ought to behave accordingly."

"There can be no question about that," the Philosopher responded; "and I for one am grateful to you for your reminder of Saint Bernard. It is strange how difficult many people find it to trace self-will in themselves. Here is a very simple illustration: we are kept up late at night, knowing that we have real and important work to do next day. We may regret that our instrument will probably not be in the best of condition; but do we resent it, either against the friend who kept us up, or against Fate? Is our inner attitude one of complaint? We should certainly learn to apply hundreds of such tests to ourselves, throughout the day, if we would really attack the monster in its den."

"Do you want some scraps of news before we adjourn?" the Student asked at this point. "If so,—a new book by Maurice Maeterlinck, entitled *La Vie dans l'espace*, is being published by Fasquelle, and is certain to appear simultaneously in English. It deals with the fourth dimension and points out that because it takes seventy-two years for a ray of light to travel from the star Mira to our earth, it follows that an astronomer on that star, observing us with a sufficiently powerful telescope, would see, not the events that we think of as contemporaneous, but the events of seventy-two years ago, such as the marriage of the third Napoleon with Eugénie de Montijo. From a still more distant star, the Crucifixion would be seen as taking place to-day. Past and future are dreams. There is only an eternal Present,—the Everlasting Now, to recall Carlyle's striking phrase.

"Another item: Sir Oliver Lodge's address before the International Homeopathic Congress of 1927 was published in the January number of 'Science Progress,' a quarterly journal edited by Sir Ronald Ross. The full title of the address is 'The Nature of Matter, and its Relation to the Ether of Space.' He suggests that life and mind are primarily inhabitants of Ether, but as Ether escapes our senses, 'we only become aware of them when they are associated with *the modified portion of Ether which we call matter*.' He suggests that the link between mind and matter is an 'Etheric body,' which, says a commentator, carries us back to Spenser's line, 'The soul is form and doth the bodie make' (I suggest an article in the QUARTERLY on 'The Source of Spenser's Theosophy,'—to be written in Devachan, and brought back 'next time'!). One of the great discoveries of the age, according to Sir Oliver, is 'the equation or identity between matter and energy.' Matter is one of the forms which energy may take. Matter 'can cease to be matter and reappear as ethereal

radiative energy. Once obtained in the form of radiation it can produce all the well-known effects that we attribute to sunlight—photographic, electric, chemical, vegetative and other.'"

"Anything to be said about the Convention?" asked the Engineer.

"I am hoping that less *output* will be necessary, than in recent years," the Ancient answered; "and that members, when it is over, will speak of its 'stillness,' rather than of its 'force.' We ought to have reached that stage. In the past, toward the end of the century, when Lodge Messengers have forced their way into the world, a certain amount of splash has been inevitable. Not so now, when the Movement has been carried so far forward; and perhaps never again. I can well imagine that the next time the Lodge 'sends,' if the messenger should find a group of disciples ready, he would not have to appear on the public stage at all,—I mean, that he would make himself known to the few only, and would work through them. Of course there are cycles within cycles. There was far more 'output' *of a kind* in 1895 than in 1925; but then in 1925 there was more 'output' than in 1905, while its quality was very much higher than in 1895. The higher the quality, the greater the depth; and the greater the depth, the greater the stillness. The stillest spot on earth must be where the Lodge Light burns,—there, on the altar of sacrifice. Great mountain peaks, snow-covered, against a blue sky; vast stretches of desert; primeval forests, untrodden by man, seen from a distance—these may suggest it, one to one person, another to another. But they are symbols only. Stillness in itself is the Will of Masters, immovable yet vibrant,—the very heart of love. May we not hope that its presence—at least its benediction—will be recognized by all members as their dominant impression of the next Theosophical Convention?"

T.

Interior mortification is acquired little by little, through never following our own wills or liking, even in the most trifling matters, until we have subdued the body to the spirit.—St. Teresa.

LETTERS TO STUDENTS

November 2nd, 1908.

DEAR ———

. . . . . You must not think that my recent communication was meant as a reproach or to contain a reproof, for I have no right to do either. . . . . Beyond a reasonable urging, I should be overstepping the bounds of my duty and of courtesy. Let us assume that you responded to a reasonable urging!

Personal correspondence *is* now, and for some time has been, a characteristic of our work. The effort is constantly being made to draw the ties which bind us together much closer than would be possible if all we did was to study the same books or believe the same philosophy of life. We are given much personal attention, though sometimes, indeed perhaps often, all that we are aware of are the individual letters which we may receive. These, however, are but an outward expression of an inward and spiritual routine. This is one of the phases of the new cycle to which you must grow accustomed. It will make a very great difference in your point of view. The mere consciousness or knowledge that every thought we think as well as every act we commit, is watched and known by those whose duty it is to look after us, is in itself a wonderful incentive to right thought and right action. Ponder this well, and you will see that it is so. I think you would be wise to make this thought a key-note of your daily life, for even if it were not true it could not help but be beneficial in every way.

It seems to me that our object for the immediate future is again individual; it is that we should so live and act as to draw closer to the Masters, and to make ourselves more perfect instruments for their work in the world.

* * * * * * *

There is no doubt that at present an attempt is being made, in which the Theosophical Movement has a part, to reinvigorate and freshen the old Christian doctrines. . . . . So here is an immensely large and valuable organization already in the world, begging for help; and there is little doubt that Theosophy can do much for it. Furthermore, being, nearly all of us, at one time members of some Christian denomination, and all of us with Christian heredity, it is the most natural method to proceed along Christian lines, instead of, say, Buddhist lines, from which we are racially barred of full comprehension. H. P. B. had to start on Eastern lines or we never should have acquired a sufficiently detached point of view from which to value

Christian teachings. We had to make an excursion into new territory, as it were, to get a fresh point of view; to get free from the mental entanglements of words and phrases. We know, for instance, what the Holy Ghost means, because we go back to a consideration of it free from its theological connotations, and with the Eastern teachings of the Higher Self, of the Universal Oversoul, etc., in our minds. We know what the Resurrection was, because we know something of the Eastern teaching of immaterial bodies, of the Mayavi Rupa, etc. And so it goes through the whole of Christian theology. The words and phrases are not stereotyped to us, they have a very real and a very vital meaning. It is now our duty gradually to instil this meaning into the minds of our Christian brethren whenever and wherever we have a chance.

* * * * * * *

I do not wish this correspondence to bore you. Perfunctory letters do no good; and I should rather wait another four or five months before hearing from you, unless you feel that you really have something to say, some opinion to express, some question to ask. I hope, however, that so long a time will not pass before you will want to write.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

C. A. Griscom.

January 3rd, 1909.

Dear ———

I have your thoughtful and most interesting letter of the 20th December. It raises many points. There is no doubt that the change of cycle which occurred at the end of the century, approximately, caused a very substantial change in the method of work in the T. S., in the character of inspiration which we received in all points which affected the Movement. We were slow to sense this change, many of us, and some are only just now beginning to understand, or at least to feel, what it is that happened. Those who are incapable of such understanding, or feeling, soon find themselves out of harmony with the rest of the Society, and slough off, for one reason or another. Such, I think, is the inner explanation of the ———— Branch trouble. The trouble with ———— was slightly different.

The troubles in the T. S. of ten years or so ago, tested our sense of personal responsibility; "use your discrimination always" was the key-note; and we learned the lesson with pain and difficulty. Then, almost as soon as we got the idea firmly fixed in our heads that we must always exercise our own judgment, we were tested upon obedience, that bed-rock of occultism. Some of us learned the lesson of using our own judgment so well and so thoroughly, that never afterwards were we willing to accept anything from anyone. The

mere suggestion that we should do or not do something was sufficient to raise our ire, and to make us kick over the traces. ———— split on this rock. They simply would not do anything they were asked to do. Others have failed on this same point, but fortunately not many.

All this has a bearing on what you say in your letter about individual development being the key-note of the present time. I think this is so; that more stress is laid upon individual effort and individual development; and I believe we may safely accept this and act upon it, if we are exceedingly careful to remember that fundamental law of laws, the necessity for perfect and unflinching obedience. The reason why many persons do not get on in spite of a whole life devoted to self-purification and work for others, is because they lack this interior attitude of the mind and will, without which no Master dares lead them beyond a certain point, and not a very high point either. The whole basis of relationship between Master and pupil must be obedience, and we must have this spirit within us before any Master would dare accept us as a pupil. As it is contrary to the whole spirit of modern, Western times, it proves to be a barrier past which few of us can go; especially as it is an intangible barrier against which we may not know that we are pressing. May I suggest, therefore, that you cultivate the spirit of simple, childlike obedience; implicit obedience; perfect, unswerving obedience, as a very essential element in your future progress. If we go forward upon the Path in this spirit, doing simply and with all our heart the task or duty which lies next at hand, we need know little of the theory which underlies the work we do, and we need not understand at all the cyclic laws which may operate at the moment.

It was exceedingly gratifying to have received such replies from Professor ———— and Dr. ————. Really I sometimes think that we may become respectable, which I surmise would be a very doubtful blessing.

Many thanks for your good wishes, which are very heartily reciprocated.

Sincerely,

C. A. Griscom.

October 19th, 1909.

Dear ————

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I have a letter from each of you which I have not answered, not because I did not want to, but solely because I have been in Europe all summer and it was hardly practicable to do any writing. We returned a short time ago, and are all of us now settling down to our regular work. It is a pleasure to be back and to be at it again.

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————, in a very beautiful letter written last June, a letter which I should be incapable of writing, refers to some of the deeper thoughts to which his

recent experiences have given rise, and, among other things, wonders why we have to spend sometimes years on a fruitless quest, and then find that what we sought was at all times almost within grasp of our hands. *Almost* within grasp, but not quite. There is the rub. We are told to meditate; we are told, by the greatest Master of them all, that we have no conception of the power of meditation, and after many years of effort we suddenly find this to be true; we find the way ahead opening out in an almost miraculous manner, and for the first time we catch a clear glimpse of the meaning of our task, the reality of the spiritual life, the warmth and comfort of divine companionship; and then we are likely to feel just what your letter expresses: "Why, oh! why, did I waste years when I had this ready to my hand."

I think the answer is that we did not waste those years, that they were required either to garner the necessary force to break through into the Kingdom of Heaven, or they were required to burn away, in the fire of suffering, certain dross in our natures which was a barrier, or which would be dangerous if vivified by the influx of power which is the necessary sequel of any degree of illumination. We are held back sometimes for our best good. The curtain is kept down until we are in position not only to see, but to use properly the knowledge which will then be ours. We see too many sad examples of men who force their way into the higher planes before they are fit to meet what they find there. It is from this sort of danger that the Spiritual Powers, which watch over the evolution of humanity, guard ordinary humanity whenever they can. There is an "if"; for even the Planetary Spirit may not go against a man's own conscious wish in such matters.

All these things,—an awakened spiritual life, chêlaship, conscious communion with the Masters, are ready at every instant of time for us to grasp, and may be grasped at any instant of time, when we have the power and the holiness to grasp them. It is in each man's own hands, but there are few who are ready on all planes of their nature for this final step. Our hearts and bodies may be ready, and our brains need a life's additional training; or brain and heart may be ready, and a few years' foolish indulgence in our youth may have made our bodies a barrier which it will take long to overcome. Or, and I hope this may be the case with both of you, it may be that your efforts have brought your natures to the threshold of chêlaship, and that all you need is just a little more power, a little additional effort,—that last ounce of weight which will bear down the balance.

If there is one thing more than another which my years in the Movement have taught me, it is that we have but little idea of the almost incredible moral and physical and psychical perfection which is required of even a new chêla. It may sound discouraging at first, but it is not so if rightly read; for if we have not yet been able to reach that definite point after all these years, it may not be because we have not made great progress, but because the point was really much farther away than we thought when we started out on our journey. We may be disappointed that we have not reached the goal, but we may also be delighted to find that we have really journeyed much farther than we had any

idea. That I think is the fact; the true condition in which most of us find ourselves.

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Your letter says that, when writing, there was peace in your Branch, but that they were still meeting at the same place. I shall hope to hear that the old trouble has receded still further into the background. For spiritual progress, there *must* be harmony among brother disciples; they *must* learn to put up with each other's peculiarities; else how will they learn to put up with the peculiarities of the Master, who is the synthesis of all his chêlas? Ponder that. It goes deep.

I hope ———— will not think that a letter addressed to both of you has been too much filled with references to what ———— wrote. It has simply served as a text to write what was in my mind, and is meant for you both. I shall hope to hear from each of you in reply. ———— writes me that he is staying with you, which I am glad to know. As he is gentle and soothing, perhaps, as an outsider, he may find a means of settling all the past troubles in the Branch.

With kindest regards to you both, I am,

Sincerely and cordially yours,
C. A. GRISCOM.

If you cannot go into the desert, of you is required the solitude of mind and of heart. You will be safe there, if there you do not think, if there you do not love, if there you do not act as they think, as they love, as they act in the world.—ST. JEROME.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES IN LIFE[1]

THAT view of one's Karma that leads to a bewailing of the unkind fate which has kept advantages in life away from us, is a mistaken estimate of what is good and what is not good for the soul. It is quite true that we may often find persons surrounded with great advantages, but who make no corresponding use of them or pay but little regard to them. But this very fact in itself goes to show that the so-called advantageous position in life is really not good nor fortunate in the true and inner meaning of those words. The fortunate one has money and teachers, ability, and means to travel and fill the surroundings with works of art, with music and with ease. But these are like the tropical airs that enervate the body; these enervate the character instead of building it up. They do not in themselves tend to the acquirement of any virtue whatever, but rather to the opposite by reason of the constant steeping of the senses in the subtile essences of the sensuous world. They are like sweet things which, being swallowed in quantities, turn to acids in the inside of the body. Thus they can be seen to be the opposite of good Karma.

What then is good Karma and what bad? The all-embracing and sufficient answer is this:

Good Karma is that kind which the Ego desires and requires; bad, that which the Ego neither desires nor requires.

And in this the Ego, being guided and controlled by law, by justice, by the necessities of upward evolution, and not by fancy or selfishness or revenge or ambition, is sure to choose the earthly habitation that is most likely, out of all possible of selection, to give a Karma for the real advantage in the end. In this light then, even the lazy, indifferent life of one born rich, as well as that of one born low and wicked, is right.

When we, from this plane, inquire into the matter, we see that the "advantages" which one would seek were he looking for the strengthening of character, the unloosing of soul force and energy, would be called by the selfish and personal world, "disadvantages". Struggle is needed for the gaining of

[1] Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. X, pages 123–125.

strength; buffeting adversities is for the gaining of depth; meagre opportunities may be used for acquiring fortitude; poverty should breed generosity.

The middle ground in all this, and not the extreme, is what we speak of. To be born with the disadvantage of drunken, diseased parents, in the criminal portion of the community, is a punishment which constitutes a wait on the road of evolution. It is a necessity, generally, because the Ego has drawn about itself in a former life some tendencies which cannot be eliminated in any other way. But we should not forget that sometimes, often in the grand total, a pure, powerful Ego incarnates in just such awful surroundings, remaining good and pure all the time, and staying there for the purpose of uplifting and helping others.

But to be born in extreme poverty is not a disadvantage. Jesus said well when, repeating what many a sage had said before, he described the difficulty experienced by the rich man in entering heaven. If we look at life from the narrow point of view of those who say there is but one earth, and, after it, either eternal heaven or hell, then poverty will be regarded as a great disadvantage and something to be avoided. But seeing that we have many lives to live, and that they will give us all needed opportunity for building up character, we must admit that poverty is not, in itself, necessarily bad Karma. Poverty has no natural tendency to engender selfishness, but wealth requires it.

A sojourn for everyone in a body born to all the pains, deprivations and miseries of modern poverty, is good and just. Inasmuch as the present state of civilization with all its horrors of poverty, of crime, of disease, of wrong relations almost everywhere, has grown out of the past, in which we were workers, it is just that we should experience it all at some point in our career. If some person who now pays no heed to the misery of men and women should next life be plunged into one of the slums of our cities for rebirth, it would imprint on the soul the misery of such a situation. This would lead later on to compassion and care for others. For, unless we experience the effects of a state of life, we cannot understand or appreciate it from a mere description. The personal part involved in this may not like it as a future prospect, but if the Ego decides that the next personality shall be there, then all will be an advantage and not a disadvantage.

If we look at the field of operation in us of the so-called advantages of opportunity, money, travel and teachers, we see at once that it all has to do with the brain and nothing else. Languages, archæology, music, satiating sight with beauty, eating the finest food, wearing the best clothes, travelling to many places, and thus infinitely varying impressions on ear and eye; all these begin and end in the brain and not in the soul or character. As the brain is a portion of the unstable, fleeting body, the whole phantasmagoria disappears from view and use when the note of death sends its awful vibration through the physical form and drives out the inhabitant. The wonderful central master-ganglion disintegrates, and nothing at all is left but some faint aromas here and there depending on the actual love within for any one pursuit or image or sensation. Nothing left of it all but a few tendencies—*skandhas*,

not of the very best. The advantages then turn out in the end to be disadvantages altogether. But imagine the same brain and body not in places of ease, struggling for a good part of life, doing their duty and not in a position to please the senses: this experience will burn in, stamp upon, carve into the character, more energy, more power and more fortitude.

It is thus through the ages that great characters are made. The other mode is the mode of the humdrum average, which is nothing after all, as yet, but an animal.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

He that well and rightly considereth his own works, will find little cause to judge hardly of another.—THOMAS À KEMPIS.

The world is full of Judgment Days, and into every assembly that a man enters, in every action he attempts, he is gauged and stamped.—EMERSON.

Man and the Supernatural, by Evelyn Underhill; Methuen and Co., 1927; price, 7s. 6d.

Evelyn Underhill's latest book will be welcomed eagerly by a growing body of readers, many of whom will agree with the present writer that it is her best. It is written with the same clearness, vigour of image, and occasional brilliance of her earlier volumes, and is impressive because of its easy mastery of difficult subjects. More than that, however, it shows that, as the reward of a truly honest mind, intellectual appreciation has become recognition, while experience has done much to change aloofness into sympathetic contact. "Such a book" as hers, the author says, "must be, to a great extent, the expression of personal conviction and experience. . . . . It is at least as much the result of meditation as of the industrious study of facts" (p. 2).

The result is something better than an analysis and exposition of what others have lived or written; it is a contribution,—and one which should be particularly helpful because couched in modern terms appealing to the modern mind.

The "point of departure" for her study is the sense which the great majority of mankind possess, namely, that there is not only "this world," familiar to all of us, but also "another world" or a "supernatural order," which lies outside the "natural." The fact that man, a "self conscious spirit," emerges from the flux of physical life, finds himself "unable to be satisfied with it," and, "parting company with his animal relations," begins "a blundering search for the hiding-place of that haunting Presence which seems to speak to him from the burning bush"—this itself is a "startling" spectacle. "Perfect adaptation to that [natural] world is no longer his standard"; all history shows us that men have reached out for something above and beyond them, and by this very fact a "genuine correspondence begins to be established between this little living and unstable creature, and a stable Reality beyond the reach of sense" (pp. 3–4). Organized religion "marks the point of contact between natural and supernatural orders," and even in "its worst corruptions and extravagances," it witnesses to "a living and abiding Reality which is distinct from and beyond the world,"—a Reality whose "ultimate demands are the hardest that humanity has to meet." One must deny the witness of history to deny that man is somehow "aware of his own status, as a creature who is somehow capable of relations with a more than natural world" (p. 5).

This general fact, then, taken not in its details of totems, fetiches, and "objectionable exhibits" of "the psychological dust-hole," but as it is writ large over the experience of a whole world of men, provides a "great conundrum which continues to baffle the most ingenious naturalist." Why should mammals of a certain type ever have felt incited to seek communion with an unseen Power?

Miss Underhill's book offers us her answer in terms of "Christian theism." Religion of late has been studied exhaustively as a branch, almost a by-product, of naturalistic anthropology; but because of what is implicit in it, she sees it rather as "perhaps the most significant branch." Religious and mystical experience are more than the mere "emergence from within the organic world of a fresh quality or power, a mere unpacking of the world's portmanteau, another episode in the endless drama of Becoming. They involve, beyond this, the awe-struck response of the creature to something wholly other and over-against itself" (p. 13). There is universal

testimony to a Divinity that shapes our lives, and a supernatural Father who is mindful of, and visits, his children. Some men are more aware of this than others, but the basic fact remains unescapable: "As the fish could not have come into existence without water, and the bird guarantees the supporting though invisible air, so I think we may reasonably claim that the undying fact of sanctity guarantees God" (p. 27). "Therefore in studying man's knowledge of, and relation with, the universe, we are justified in giving a large place to the existence and the declarations of spiritual genius. Indeed, we are bound to do so; for here, so to speak, are the laboratory specimens on which our practical work must be done. Here is the only human type which claims to speak from observation and experience, not from deduction and speculation, of the realities beyond sense" (p. 21).

The first and unanimous testimony of these "mystics," who insist that "they know for certain. . . . . a spiritual order, penetrating, and everywhere conditioning though transcending the world of sense" (p. 22), is that they are not "the painstaking discoverers of something, but the astonished receivers of something. . . . . The words of St. John—'We love him because he first loved us' sum up, when fully understood, their whole doctrine of mystical experience. This is a position completely opposed to all speculations of personal idealism, all philosophies of mere development and change; for it requires us to hold that the supreme and living Object of the soul's desire Himself incites this desire as a part of His scheme of human life. . . . . Thus, feeling the power, the sweetness and the wonder that overwhelm our strangely compounded human nature when the sense of God enters the conscious field, the mystics can exclaim with no sense of unreality: 'O grace inestimable and marvellous worthiness! O love without measure, singularly showed unto man' (*The Imitation of Christ*, Bk. IV, 13; cf. p. 37)."

With these ideas as her main thesis, the author discusses in a series of chapters the contrasts and relations of the Supernatural with the Natural, and how the Supernatural, beginning (in terms of human consciousness) as instinct, develops into vivid first-hand experience, and finally can be recognized as a leading factor in the very fabric of history. This involves a study of the supernatural as "Personality," or in terms of a direct "Incarnation," then in symbols and sacraments, and, finally, in human life, by means of prayer and sanctification. It is impossible in the brief compass of a review even to sketch all that is contained in this compact little book under these several heads, but the reviewer urges a study of them, because much will be found which answers the oft-repeated questions of the day.

Students of Theosophy will see both how far a thorough study of mystical experience can take a sincere mind, and how the very limitations of the Western mystics, together with Western prejudices and misunderstandings, can circumscribe the results achieved. Miss Underhill is obviously acquainted with some literature of Theosophy; but her characterization of the " 'ancient wisdom' of Theosophy" as refusing "to convey supernatural value because, like well-tinned asparagus, though it may on the dish look very attractive it is only pretending to be alive" (p. 104), shows that she knows only the neatly pigeonholed and widely advertised travesty set forth by those self-appointed prophets who left the Theosophical Movement long years ago. If a St. Teresa, a St. Augustine, or a Charles de Foucauld had been, not only saints and mystics, but also self-conscious chêlas of the Lodge (though not members of any society labelled Theosophical), and had written of their experiences in Western terms, the author would have considered carefully, and duly weighed, their testimony. But her Western inheritance and training do not yet seem to permit her to enter with insight and understanding into the experience or teaching of those, so numerous in the East, so few in the West, whose inner life has at last transcended the formulas and traditions of any given century or environment, and who have taken their place within the ranks of just men "made perfect". Thus, dealing with the Supernatural "self-given in history," she can so completely fail to grasp the philosophy of the East as to write: "We insult history by regarding it as a form of *Maya;* as the sweep of varied cloud armies across an unchanging sky. This poor conception shows little understanding of the richly woven fabric of the universe" (p. 107). Or again, dealing with the Supernatural given in Personality by way of "Incarnation," she will only accord "in a limited sense, the value of incarnation" to the Buddhist conception of an *avatar* or Bodhisattva, who renounces Nirvana that "he may return to the world and save the souls of men,"—while "so

far as this planet is concerned—the perfect case is seen in Bethlehem and Calvary" (pp. 142–3).

Allowing for these limitations, which, while we may regret them, certainly serve to make *Man and the Supernatural* far more acceptable to Western readers of to-day, we may point to one marked advance over the author's earlier works. At no time has Miss Underhill felt comfortable when confronted with the direct testimony of intercommunion between Master and disciple. With no clear recognition of the Lodge, or of an ascending scale of spiritual consciousnesses, she was heretofore forced to interpret what are technically known as "locutions," in terms of Eternal Reality, mediated or coloured by a given individual's psychology. There is still qualification, but we now find her writing: "This response—inevitably made under symbols, and involving certain well-marked feeling states—seems to the soul, above all else, the response of a person to a Person" (p. 216). Instead of regarding these symbols and states as wholly symbolic, or as limitations imposed by finite and personal man upon Infinite and Impersonal Reality, she has come to see that the whole trend of "supernatural experience" is a demonstration of the effort of the Real to achieve richer and nobler *personal* incarnation. "We cannot in any real sense have unmediated communion with Universals; but only with particulars which embody and represent them. This truth, already seen to be the basis of incarnational and sacramental religion, is still operative in the secret life of prayer. It gives us an explanation, agreeable alike to faith and to psychology, of the fact that abstract contemplation and worship of the Godhead will not alone suffice to feed the hungry soul. It guarantees the validity of that personal and intimate type of devotion which has been so richly developed in Christianity" (p. 226)—and, we might interject, even more richly developed in the East and throughout the history of the real Theosophical Movement, in every land and within every religion. Furthermore, "man's full relation to the Supernatural is a relation not only of patient, but also of agent. He is awakened, called, and trained, that he may work on spiritual levels with and for the purposes of God. We see the visible world filled with an endless variety of living-growing creatures, at every stage upon the ladder of being. Distinct yet interdependent, they act and react on one another in countless ways; and thus contribute to the glory and richness of the physical universe. Even so, we may think of the invisible world as filled with living intelligences, endless too in their variety of type and degree, their place on the ladder of life; but all acting and reacting on one another, and contributing to the richness of the glory of God" (p. 232).

This is a notable statement coming from so scientific, so modern and so Western a mind. The book, as far as it goes, is an exceptionally clear exposition of propositions fundamentally theosophic. One must continue to regret that the travesties of Theosophy current to-day, especially in England, should almost inevitably turn a mind away from Theosophy itself—because in real Theosophy lie the only satisfactory explanations of precisely Miss Underhill's chosen field of inquiry—mystical experience. A. G.

The Voice of the Silence, by "H. P. B." Reprinted by The Chinese Buddhist Research Society, Peking, 1927.

This reprint of a great work is sponsored by Alice Leighton Cleather and Basil Crump, former members of The Theosophical Society, whose attitude toward W. Q. Judge is wholly unjustifiable, but who rightly resent the mutilation of Mme. Blavatsky's teaching by persons who make unwarranted claims to represent her thought and purpose. The book is well printed, and closely follows the style and format of the original edition, issued under Mme. Blavatsky's personal supervision, in 1889.

Further, this edition purports to have been issued under the auspices of one of the highest authorities on Tibetan Buddhism, the Tashi Lama, who, leaving Tibet in 1924, went on a special mission to China and Mongolia, visiting Peking in December, 1925. There, the two students of Oriental religions came into touch with him, and we are told that it was at his request that this reprint of *The Voice of the Silence* was issued, "as the only true exposition in English of the Heart Doctrine of the *Mahayana* and its noble ideal of self-sacrifice for human-

ity." As a frontispiece for this reprint, the Tashi Lama is said to have written four verses in Tibetan, reproduced in facsimile, and translated as follows in an appendix:

> All beings desire liberation from misery.
> Seek, therefore, for the causes of misery and expunge them.
> By entering on the Path liberation from misery is attained.
> Exhort, then, all beings to enter the Path.

There is also a note by a Chinese Buddhist, who recognizes that *The Voice of the Silence* "comprises a part of the teachings of the Esoteric School." He thinks it should be translated into Chinese, and hopes to be able to undertake this translation at some future time.

C. J.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Edited by W. Y. Evans-Wentz; Oxford University Press, 1927; price, $5.50.

The most interesting thing in this book is the frequent reference to *The Secret Doctrine* and other writings of Mme. Blavatsky, as authoritative sources of information concerning the Buddhism of Tibet. In a note on page 7, the Editor writes: "The late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup (the Tibetan translator of this work) was of opinion that, despite the adverse criticisms directed against H. P. Blavatsky's works, there is adequate internal evidence in them of their author's intimate acquaintance with the higher *lamaistic* teachings, into which she claimed to have been initiated."

This is a valuable tribute, although it is in part misleading, as Mme. Blavatsky did not claim to have been initiated into the teachings of Lamaism, strictly so called, but into a far older and more universal school. Further, Mme. Blavatsky has much to say, and not in a favourable sense, concerning the school of Buddhism, or Lamaism, to which the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* belongs, and of the schools in Sikkhim in which it is studied; for example, under the headings, "Tassissudun," and "Dugpas," in the *Theosophical Glossary*. Further, the very intelligent Japanese Buddhist, Ekai Kawaguchi, author of *Three Years in Tibet*, gives a candid description of Padma Sambhava, the founder of the school to which the text under review belongs, which supplies ample justification for Mme. Blavatsky's strictures. The Japanese pilgrim brings forward sound evidence to show that Padma Sambhava was a sensualist and a libertine, who based his teachings on the "self-expression" of the lower nature. Yet the book under review describes this same Padma Sambhava as "the first teacher in Tibet to expound the *Bardo Thödol*," and the Great Guru for all devotees who follow the *Bardo* teaching, that is, the teaching contained in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

On page 60, the editor of this translation writes: "I was unaware when I wrote *The Fairy Faith* that Huxley held—as he did—the theory of human incarnation to offer the best explanation of even ordinary physiological and biological phenomena." This sentence gives the impression that Huxley accepted the teaching of reincarnation, and, therefore, the teaching of conditional immortality, of which it is a part. A careful reading of the passages referred to, in *Evolution and Ethics* (pages 61–2, 95, 1894), does not bear this out. Huxley says: "Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality; and it may claim such support as the great argument from analogy is capable of supplying." This is far from a real acceptance of reincarnation; and that Huxley wholly failed to understand the cognate doctrine of liberation, is clear, when we find him describing one who has entered the path in these terms: "All that remained of a man was the impassive, extenuated, mendicant monk, self-hypnotised into cataleptic trances, which the deluded mystic took for foretastes of the final union with Brahma."

The editor further brings out fully that the teaching with which he is concerned is a development of the Tantrika system. What Mme. Blavatsky said of that system can be learned from the *Theosophical Glossary*, where its dangers are sufficiently set forth. All this inspires serious misgiving regarding the contents of the Tibetan text translated and commented on, in this book; and a deeper study of the text confirms these misgivings. The process

described is based on a partial insight into the earlier stages of Kama Loka, into which the average man enters on departing from the body. Before death, the Tantrikist who comes to perform the last rites, seeks to establish a mesmeric or hypnotic hold on the astral personality of the dying man, and to maintain this hold after the astral man has left the body and entered Kama Loka. Then a sustained effort is made to arouse the consciousness of the deceased astral man, first, with the hope that, taking advantage of the passage between two illusions, he may wake up to reality and enter "Nirvana"; and second, should this first objective fail, to arouse him to a realization that what he is experiencing in Kama Loka is wholly a projection from his own passional, emotional and mental nature, and thus to aid him to strip off some of the trappings of illusion. It is quite possible that, given a strong mesmeriser and an astral man whose whole thought during life had been imbued with this teaching, a certain success, at least in the second purpose, might be attained; though, even so, it could mean no more than the exchange of one kind of illusion for another. It is evident that the result, in the long run, would be profoundly injurious to the soul concerned, since what is proposed is a forcible intrusion on the normal process of spiritual gestation. Consequently, while it is a satisfaction to find an acknowledgment of Mme. Blavatsky's profound knowledge in a book issued by the Oxford University Press, one cannot but regret that this vindication is connected with doctrines that are more than equivocal, emanating from a school which she herself so sternly criticized.

J.

Purposive Evolution, by Edmund Noble; Henry Holt and Company; price $5.00.

The author undertakes to show that purposive evolution is the link between science and religion and that the whole of evolution, including organic evolution, is the result of a purpose, inherent in the character of the universe. This purposiveness works out by what might be called a series of emanations: first, ether, dynamic, uniform, containing within itself the promise and potency of all later manifestation; then what we call inorganic matter, also dynamic, produced not uniformly throughout the whole substance of the ether, but at centres of manifestation immensely distant from each other, and represented by the stars and stellar systems. Here the purposiveness of the universe manifests itself, for example, in our solar system, where a law of harmony evidently reigns, perpetually readjusting such aberrations as those which affect the movement of the moon, and ever bringing them back to normal order. Then, in the fulness of time, organic life appears, pushed forward by the same inherent thrust; and this forward pressure generates the favourable variations on which natural selection then operates.

It is at once evident that very much of this thought closely follows the lines laid down in *The Secret Doctrine*. But the approach to the thought of that great work is even closer. Edmund Noble is ready to believe that not our planet only, but other planets throughout the whole stellar system may be inhabited, and that some of these celestial inhabitants may be far higher than man. Thus he writes: "Meanwhile we are far from having the right to assume that life has reached its zenith point in man. The cosmos is wide enough, the stars are numerous enough, to encourage the belief that in countless planets other than our own the power behind the evolutionary process may have lifted matter to heights of intelligence and efficiency that outtop our own levels as we outtower the life forms farthest beneath us." This brings us back to Huxley, who said there might be beings as much higher than man, as man is higher than the black beetle.

Much more might be quoted, regarding what we should call the alternation of Manvantara and Pralaya, the law of cycles and the law of Karma. The approach to Buddhist thinking is marked throughout the book, though Edmund Noble has not carried his thinking as far as did the Buddhists regarding the possible continuity of consciousness through a chain of reincarnations. He is rather a mystically inclined speculative philosopher than a mystic.

J.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION NO. 338.—*Years ago there was an article in the* QUARTERLY *on the "Lesson of the Garbage Pail." I understand from it that we are always to do our work exceedingly well, as if we were doing it for our Master's inspection. But how can a person do this, when there is never time in any day to do all its duties even imperfectly? We read, "In Occultism duties never conflict." Perhaps an explanation of this would solve my problems.*

ANSWER.—There is always time for every real duty, and to do it perfectly. That we perform some particular duty imperfectly, is because of some fault within ourselves,—such as wrong self-identification, mixture of motive, laziness, inertia, love of comfort, fear, and so on down the scale. These same faults operate to confuse us, so that we are constantly failing to see clearly as duties those things which are really duties, and are constantly regarding as duties things with which we are not in the least obliged to concern ourselves. We fail to discriminate intelligently. Moreover, in the manner of performing a duty, we often waste time and energy with the result that we feel hurried and crowded, and *think* that we have not time to do all that we know we should do. C. R. A.

ANSWER.—The sentence "there is never time in any day to do all its duties even imperfectly," suggests a harassed and unmethodical mind. The remedy is detachment and order. No intelligent employer will ever give an employee more work than can be done in the appointed time. The Lords of Karma are intelligent employers. They never impose more work than can be well done; but they may seem to do so, in order to compel detachment and orderliness. J.

ANSWER.—I imagine that even if we had unlimited time for the performance of any or all of our duties, we should still feel that we could and should have done a great deal better, since we must always see an ideal standard beyond even our high-water mark of attainment. Time, therefore, is really of little account. I confess that I used to experience great difficulty in accepting the statement, "In Occultism duties never conflict," because I had hourly proof to the contrary,—or so I thought. I have since come to feel, however, that when I begin to know something about occultism, I shall probably have no further difficulty in sorting out my duties. Before we have any real conception of what occultism means, I am sure that we often mistake the unnecessary for the important; we assume that something is a duty, when in reality it is but an inclination. No wonder that there is conflict! When we have reached the point where we can recognize the difference between a duty and a caprice, and what is more, when we have the sense to *act* on this recognition, I think the millennium will have come. T. A.

ANSWER.—The querent may find it helpful to divide the occupations of any one day into the following groups: 1. Duties which must be done *by me*. 2. "Duties" which I am accustomed to think must be done by me, but which could conceivably be performed by someone else. 3. "Duties" which I am accustomed to think must be done, but which I really do from force of habit, from obedience to conventions, or from undue regard for the real or imagined opinions of someone else. Such a division, if made with entire honesty, clears the decks, removing much

of the supposed "conflict" between duties,—and proving that there is available more time than may have been suspected, for the careful and complete performance of such real duties as remain. J. G. G.

ANSWER.—It is true that real duties do not conflict, and also true that we ought to do our duties as perfectly as possible, *taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case.* Let us assume that a mother, who does her own housework, has a sick child. It is her duty to sweep a room which requires an hour to do thoroughly. In half an hour it will be time to prepare her child's dinner. What ought she to do? Obviously she ought to sweep the room as best she can in half an hour. When the time comes to prepare the dinner, that becomes the mother's duty and sweeping the room ceases to be so. Those duties do not conflict. Had there been no sick child, her duty would have been different. Then the room should have been thoroughly cleaned, as if for the inspection of her Master. Discrimination between apparently conflicting duties is in itself a most important duty and, like all duties, a means of growth.

J. F. B. M.

ANSWER.—It has been said that he who does the best he can does enough for the Masters. In the "Lesson of the Garbage Pail," the aspirant was granted by Karma a free half-hour during which he had nothing to do except to clean the pail as thoroughly as possible. But let us suppose that during that interval the house had caught fire. He would have instantly dropped the pail and given the alarm. There would have been no conflict of duties. One duty would have been superseded by another. Our true duty consists in undertaking a work and in completing it if possible. But it is equally our duty to stop whatever we are doing when we are called to another task. S. L.

T·S·ACTIVITIES

NOTICE OF CONVENTION

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

To the Branches of The Theosophical Society:

1. The Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society will be held at 64 Washington Mews, New York, on Saturday, April 28th, 1928, beginning at 10:30 A.M.

2. Branches unable to send delegates to the Convention are *earnestly requested* to send proxies. These may be made out to the Secretary T. S., or to any officer or member of the Society who is resident in New York or is to attend the Convention. These proxies should state the number of members in good standing in the Branch.

3. Branch Secretaries are asked to send their annual reports to the Secretary T. S. These reports should cover the significant features of the year's work and should be accompanied by a complete list of officers and members, with the full name and address of each; also a statement of the number of members gained or lost during the year; also a record of the place and time of Branch meeting. These reports should reach the Secretary T. S. by April 15th.

4. Members-at-large are invited to attend the Convention sessions; and all Branch members, whether delegates or not, will be welcome.

5. Following the custom of former years, the sessions of the Convention will begin at 10:30 A. M. and 2:30 P.M. At 8:30 P.M. there will be a meeting of the New York Branch of the T. S., to which delegates and visitors are cordially invited.

6. On Sunday, April 29th, at 3:30 P.M., there will be a public lecture. Tickets are not required for admission. Invitation cards will be supplied to all members, on request, so that they may have opportunity to call the lecture to the attention of their friends who reside in New York or in the vicinity. Following the lecture, tea is served at 64 Washington Mews, to delegates, members, and the friends they wish to invite.

ISABEL E. PERKINS,
Secretary, The Theosophical Society.
P. O. Box 64, Station O, New York.

March 20th, 1928.

MAURICO DE LA CUEVA

We learn with deep regret from Mr. González Jiménez, of the death at an advanced age of Mr. Maurico de la Cueva, one of our best members in Venezuela. He was a friend of Mr. Dominguez Acosta with whom he first read Theosophy, and they joined the Society together. Mr. González writes that he was a man of great energy, his voice never silent when innocence was sacrificed; and that he was loved and respected by all, friends and enemies alike. We lose in him an example of the virile defence of righteousness, and of genuine charity.

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The Theosophical Society

Founded by H. P. Blavatsky at New York in 1875

THE Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society, held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane, and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics*.

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *path* to tread in this."

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S., P. O. Box 64, Station O, New York.

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